

UNDEFEATED
BATHAMUT
CHRONICLE

最弱無敗の 神装機龍

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アーシャリア
立体映像はゆっくりと
双眸を見開いた。

「話の続きと結末を、教えて欲しい」

「どうして、フギルは
あのような生き方をしているのか」

「伝えねばなりません。全てを、
私が望み続けていた決着をつけるために」



「俺を倒して『聖蝕』を止めるか？
英雄の使命を代わるというのか？」

「はあああああッ！」

オーバーリミット
ルクスとフギルが——極限の『限界突破』で戦っている。



「今更そんなこと言っんですか？」

「ごめんね。アイリにまで
また面倒をかけちゃって」

白い長手袋を身につけた
アイリの手を取って、ルクスは部屋を出る。
護衛として三和音^{トライアド}が付き従う中、
石造りの長い回廊を歩いてテラスに向かう。

Character



ルクス・アーカディア

滅亡したアーカディア帝国の皇子、『黒き英雄』。
『無敗の最弱』と呼ばれる機竜使い。



リーズシャルテ・アティスマータ

アティスマータ新王国の王女。朱^{あか}の戦姫^{せんき}と呼ばれる。
神装機竜《ティアマト》の使い手。



フィルフィ・アイングラム

アイングラム財閥の次女。ルクスの幼馴染みで学園長の妹。
神装機竜《テュポーン》の使い手。



クルルシファー・エインfolk

北の大国、ユミル教国からの留学生であるクラスメイト。
神装機竜《ファフニール》の使い手。



アイリ・アーカディア

旧帝国の皇族の生き残り。
一年生で、ルクスの実の妹。



セリスティア・ラルグリス

シヴァレス
『騎士団』団長、学園最強の三年生。四大貴族の公爵家
令嬢で、神装機竜《リンドヴルム》の使い手。



切姫夜架

『帝国の凶刃』と呼ばれた暗殺者の少女。ルクスを主と
認め、仕えている。神装機竜《夜刀ノ神^{ヤトノカミ}》の使い手。



フギル・アーカディア

『世界改変』完遂のために暗躍する、謎多き強者。
改変機竜《ウロボロス》を駆る「始まりの英雄」。

World

装甲機竜《ドラグライド》

遺跡から発掘された、古代兵器。

その中でも希少種であり、高い性能を持つものは、神装機竜と呼ばれる。

また、装甲機竜の使い手は、機竜使い《ドラグナイト》と呼ばれる。

遺跡《ルイン》

世界に七つ発見された古代遺跡。装甲機竜《ドラグライド》が発掘されたため、国力を左右する重要な存在として、各国間で縄張り争いが起きている。

幻神獣《アビス》

遺跡から現れる謎の幻獣。人類の脅威であり、機竜使いのみが対抗できる。

終焉神獣《ラグナレク》

ひとつの遺跡に対し一匹のみ存在するという、超常の力を秘めた七匹の幻神獣。

『黒き英雄』

正体不明の装甲機竜《ドラグライド》を使い、たった1機で帝国の装甲機竜の約1200機を倒したと言われる伝説の英雄。

アティスマータ新王国

リーズシャルテの父であるアティスマータ伯が、アーカディア帝国に対して行ったクーデターによって、五年前に建国された国。

アーカディア旧帝国

世界の五分之一を束ねていた大国。世界最強と謳^{うた}われた、圧倒的な軍事力を背景に圧政を敷いていたが、クーデターによって滅ぼされた。
ルクスとアイリは、この帝国の皇族の生き残り。

七竜騎聖

年々高まる幻神獣の脅威に対抗し、世界協定に加盟した各国から選出された、代表の機竜使いたち。【大聖域】での最終決戦で敗北、瓦解している。

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Prologue – The Curse of Hero

「Now, answer me my wise little brother. What do you wish for from here on.」

.

The imperial palace of the Arcadia Empire was shrouded with rising sparks of flame.

Two Bahamuts were facing each other. The night sky that was adorned by the colors of jet black and red acted as their background.

.

In the imperial castle five years ago, the emperor took Airi hostage and Lux's revolution failed.

But—Fugil who had been pretending to be unable to fight as a Drag-Knight until then eradicated the imperial soldiers in that place and told Lux about his mission to change the world using the Artifact^{Variable Drag-Ride}

Humans would rule over other humans and gradually form a tyrannical system—and like that the balance of the world would gradually go out of order. Fugil had been secretly maneuvering behind the scenes for more than a thousand years in order to correct the crumbling balance.

No, Lux didn't know whether Fugil's deeds could really be called as secret maneuvers.

Fugil was genuinely wishing to save this world.

He would save people. And then the successors of those people he saved would eventually grow impudent and prideful, and begin to oppress the people once more. When that time came, Fugil would act as the punisher who destroyed the system that went out of order.

He told Lux to massacre all the important people in the Arcadia Empire, the imperial family and the chief vassals to bring an end to everything.

People wouldn't change their way of thinking once they had been infected by the poison called authority.

He declared that Lux's method that wished to urge such people to reform themselves wouldn't be able to change anything.

But Lux didn't give in even after being told that.

「Even so, I——」

Lux looked back and thought.

Within the Old Empire, Lux and Airi didn't get infected by the poison of authority and were kept at a distance by the people in power. In such situation—they were saved by Fugil.

Without Fugil's strength, Lux wouldn't even be able to stand on the stage to assert his will like this.

Once the people who didn't know anything one-sidedly decided that Lux was evil just because he was royalty and hated him. They even abandoned his mother to die. It made Lux hate the world.

But, now after Philuffy had saved him, he couldn't bring himself to hate the people.

Fugil was saying that the Arcadia family and the people who sided with them, not even one of them held compassion toward the masses. But——

「I believe, that you are wrong.」

「Hou.....」

The duty of a hero was to ascertain what is evil and destroying it without fail.

Fugil claimed that he had continued to destroy such evils until now. In response Lux looked straight into his eyes.

「You shouldn't just leave it to other people, you should lead them yourself! If you have the ideal that you want people to understand each other then——!」

「——But, you are unable to turn your ideals into reality.」

Fugil smiled scornfully towards Lux and replied.

Lux and Count Atismata were outwitted by the emperor. Their revolution ended in failure.

「You are unable to judge evil and save the good. To do such thing is impossible even with my power. A power that equaled a god would be necessary for that. You don't have both the resolve and the qualification to control such power. You are the weakest who can't even ascertain what should be saved and what should be discarded. Someone like you——」

After Fugil muttered that, Uroboros squirmed behind him and emitted seven-colored light radiantly.

Right after that, the two of them drew out their sword as though mirroring each other and rushed forward.

Episode 1 – The Last Banquet

Part 1

Located a slight distance away from the royal capital Lordgalia was the Ancient Forest.

More than ten minutes had passed since the battle against the remaining Automatas and Queen Raffi had been settled.

Lux was looking up towards the sky alone in order to let the remaining heat from the battle cool down.

He was apprehended by the sensation as though he was climbing high to the sky when he was looking up at the snowy sky like this.

The memories of the past surfaced inside Lux's mind.

He indulged himself in a reverie by himself like this after attending Queen Raffi at her deathbed together with Lisha.

「You're being too careless for the hero who has saved the world.」

The one who called out to the back of Lux who was somberly standing still was Krulcifer dressed in her pilot suit.

The blue haired girl was beautiful like a fairy. Her body wasn't shivering even in this snowy temperature, perhaps because she originated from a northern country.

「Hero, is it.....」

Lux held a longing for a 『hero』 to come during the era of the Old Empire, but no such existence appeared before him.

Nobody stood up against that tyrannical reign. Nobody was able to.

Everyone was swallowed by the ordinary day while pretending to not see everything that was wrong with it.

And so, if there was no hero.....

He himself will—Lux wished to become a hero himself.

He tried to change the world along with the hero Count Atismata who rose in revolt, and Fugil who was giving Lux guidance.

「I'm sorry if my words rubbed you the wrong way. It's not my intention to put even more burden than this on you Lux-kun.」

Krulcifer seemed to interpret Lux's muttering in a different meaning and smiled wryly.

「I'm simply expressing my thanks to your courage and action. Though it's a bit annoying that even our memories got rewound back then.」

Krulcifer chuckled and sent him a suggestive sidelong glance.

Seeing her smile reminded Lux of the world revision that was executed by Uroboros's Divine Raiment—the looping three days of parade where he entered a romantic relationship once with almost all the girls who he was particularly close with.

The girls had completely forgotten those memories, but with the removal of the world revision's binding spell, they now remembered those memories.

Krulcifer had remembered, along with Celis, Philuffy, and also Yoruka.

Naturally they must be having mixed feelings because of that.

「T-that's, a-about that matter——」

Lux's cheeks reddened and he unconsciously became flustered, but,

「Don't worry, I have no intention to hound Lux-kun about that matter right away. I don't know if that will still be the case when everything has

settled down though.」

「.....」

From the way she worded it, it seemed that Krulcifer didn't have the slightest intention to treat the matter as though it was something that never happened.

(I'm going to have to talk with everyone after this, but somehow it feels like there is another pressure coming down on me now.....)

「Now, let's go. Captain Magialca is preparing a feast. Originally there shouldn't be any time for something like that but——」

「No. Right now everyone is tired and unable to equip their Drag-Rides, they need rest. After this——」

Lux almost let his real thought slip out, but he managed to hold it back.

His wish from after that was something that he couldn't say.

「After this we have to return to the New Kingdom and get back on our feet, isn't that right.....」

「Yes.....」

The intelligent Krulcifer was aware of the meaning behind Lux's words.

But she deliberately overlooked it.

She was simply watching over Lux, waiting for him to say it from his own initiative.

She knew what Lux would choose to do after this.

But even knowing that, Krulcifer intended to accompany him till the very end.

「——This way. Everyone is waiting for you.」

Krulcifer walked ahead to lead Lux.

Lux slowly followed the footprints that were stamped on the piling up snow.

Part 2

The center of Avalon that had been moved was sleeping in the underground of the site of a temple that was constructed from stone.

Everyone other than Lux had already gathered there around a huge bonfire.

The members of Syvalles starting from Lisha.

The members of the Azure Division starting from Alma.

There were also the members of the Seven Dragon Paladins who he was familiar with. Other than them there were also the private soldiers of the four great nobles led by Nier and Dawla, along with the Drag-Knights of the New Kingdom army. A banquet for a large gathering of dozens of people was being held there.

「Hm? You're late sweetheart. Quickly come to my side and accompany me drinking!」

「Err, Captain Magialca..... Just what is this?」

「What are you asking? It's a banquet just as you see. This is the celebration for our success in smashing apart the world revision's binding spell and destroying Fugil's scheme magnificently.」

「.....Haa」

Lux hung his head down listlessly.

They were greatly helped by the cargo of food and first aid kit that Magialca ordered her subordinates to transport here, so he couldn't find fault with her imprudence here, but he was still feeling conflicted.

「Don't be like that. I can also understand how you feel. But—you won't even be able to rest your body if you don't wind down. This is also a necessary process for you if you consider the matter after this.」

「Well, you are right but」

Magialca was the only one here gulping down wine, perhaps because she was heavily injured and wouldn't be able to participate in the battle.

The members of Syvalles including Lux and Lisha couldn't bring themselves to make merry at all thinking about the tragedy that had occurred in the New Kingdom and the aftermath that would come from it. That was their honest feeling.

「Lux, don't mind her.」

Lisha who was at the right side of the banquet called out to him with a small sigh.

「I'm already thankful just from all the medics and material that she brought here. Overlook it if it's just a bit of rudeness. After all she is the one getting dragged into the complications of our New Kingdom.」





「.....Yes」

Lux nodded at Lisha's unreserved words.

He felt like they had returned to become a lord and a retainer once more after a brief period of time where they were standing on different sides.

「Lisha-sama, somehow you have become more like a princess now. No, I'm not saying that you weren't like a princess until now——」

Tillfur commented with interest at Lisha's dignified attitude. It was Sharis who then chided her in exasperation.

「Tillfur. Stop with your jokes at this kind of time at least..... You're being rude to the princess.」

「Yes. We have to discipline her later.」

「——Don't worry about it. I'm also thankful to you three. I have made you accompany me many times into this kind of battle where we don't know whether we will be able to survive or not. That is solely because of my uselessness.」

Tillfur stood up solemnly in response when she saw Lisha's self-depreciating smile.

「Lisha-sama—you're being too distant by saying that. It's only natural for us Syvalles to stand against the dangers that threatened the New Kingdom!」

「You're right. Thank you.」

「.....」

It seemed that Lisha was growing up a lot as a princess after experiencing the parting with Raffi.

She was only looking stout-hearted on the front, but she must still be feeling sad inside.

(Surely—— She will get back on her feet and lead the New Kingdom.)

And yet the way Lisha was staring forward made Lux able to hold such conviction.

The conversation then calmed down for the moment. As though waiting for such timing, the girl with androgynous air.....Aeril of the Lords raised her hand.

「Lux-kun. Let's take a rest for at least two hours until we can wear our Drag-Rides again. Fugil was heading to the Garden. I estimated it would

take him less than six hours until he return here. We have to decide what to do before he returns——」

「Thank you Aeryl. Then, I'll take a rest where everyone is.」

Fortunately none of their main forces were gravely injured.

They should be able to display at least around 70% of their strength after resting for a while.

However—— they wouldn't have that much time remaining if they resolved themselves to stay here.

Everyone understood that even without anyone saying it out loud.

Aeryl would be able to contract with the center of Avalon and stop the program that was producing the Sacred Eclipse in their current situation.

But, all the members here were aware that it wouldn't end with just that.

「Everyone, I'm sorry that I was staying quiet until now. Also thank you for allying with me.」

By staying quiet, Lux referred to how he was leading the Azure Division and fought in order to defeat Queen Raffi who was possessed by the Sacred Eclipse.

But, everyone understood that it was something that couldn't be helped in that situation because of the world revision.

「Lux, you aren't permitted to apologize like that. Let's not mention it anymore. I know that you were thinking of the New Kingdom's future when you decided to face the threat without letting anyone knowing about it.」

Lux walked to the right side when Syvalles members were gathered and the first thing he did was apologize to them, but the captain Celis spoke representing everyone's feelings.

「The New Kingdom has been saved from the Sacred Eclipse's threat thanks to you. Allow me to thank you formally as the eldest daughter of one of the Four Great Nobles.」

「.....」

Celis bowed. The others also nodded silently after her.

Just from that it was conveyed to him that all of them were feeling the same with each other.

「But, to tell the truth, I wish that you would confide in us. You shouldn't try to shoulder the sin by yourself. Even if it might be difficult for you to confide in us because of Ouroboros's Divine Raiment——」

「It's just as Celis-senpai said. I was in the wrong. It won't be enough no matter how much I reflect on it.」

Saving everyone in the New Kingdom even if he alone had to sacrifice himself——

Lux had painfully realized how naïve that way of thinking was through his battle against Lisha.

That he could be here right now was all thanks to everyone.

The he was able to overcome many dangers and still be here like this was only because he joined strength with everyone.

He was terrified that he would lose them by making them fight, he absolutely didn't want to burden them with unhappiness and hardship, and so he decided to fight alone. But that was a mistake.

Because he had learned once more how reassuring it was to have them by his side and giving him a push on his back.

「Let's leave the introspection meeting at that. You will be exhausted and collapse again if you don't relax and eat something.」

「Yes—— Then I won't hold back, errr.....」

「Nii-san, just say 'I'm back'.」

Lux was at a loss of how he should relax while also joining the banquet. It was then that his little sister Airi gave him a specific answer.

Lux followed her suggestion and sat down in front of the bonfire.

「You're right. I'm back, everyone——」

「Welcome, Lu-chan.」

「Welcome back, Aruji-sama.」

Philuffy, Yoruka, and everyone else accepted his words with smiling faces.

It was a place that Lux himself sought and wished for.

He enjoyed a warm time surrounded by everyone just for a bit.

.

Nearby where Lux and the others were having a meal and warming themselves, the mechanics that Magialca brought here were repairing the Drag-Rides.

Greifer, Mel, Soffice, Rosa.

They were the ace Drag-Knights who represented their respective countries, but they still responded to Magialca's call and gathered here. Lux went around to say his thanks to them.

「Well, I've gone too far to back out now. In the end the battles also not gonna end if Sacred Eclipse ain't stopped, so there isn't any other choice.」

「Well, Onii-chan is the representative of an allied country after all. I'm looking forward to your gratitude later.」

Greifer was brusque like usual while Mel was prim and proper even though she was the youngest one here. Lux smiled wryly towards them.

On the other hand he received a warm welcome from Soffice and Rosa.

「It's also my own desire as a Key's Supervisor for the Ruins to be used correctly, so it's only natural that I help. I was also able to win thanks to a teaching from you Lux.」

「I'm happy to hear that.」

Lux's expression relaxed from hearing Soffice's words that she became stronger from being influenced and learning from someone else. Rosa who also defeated an Automata on her own was also the same.

「Me too. I'm happy that I'm able to be of help for Lux-sama. By the way..... if there is still time then, I mean, we can sneak quietly over there.....」

「What are you planning to do with me in this situation-.....!？」

「Don't worry. I won't trouble Lux-sama at all. I will take care of everything.」

「That's not the problem.....!」

Everyone around him were looking coldly at him during that conversation.

For some reason recently Rosa's emotions would run wild and brought danger to him.

In a sense, even Yoruka might still be in more moderation than her.

「Somehow I'm feeling relieved but also not at the same time..... I wish that Lux-kun will make it clear soon though.」

On the other side Aeril was watching that conversation in exasperation while connecting with Avalon for obtaining the authorization in preparation to break inside.

She used the data chip that they brought back from Garden to reboot Arshalia's AI that was sealed in the central.

However even she was also taking rest after she finished with the preparations.

No one was saying it out loud even though it was on their mind.

—Stopping the Sacred Eclipse that would regenerate endlessly from working anymore.

It was something that had to be done no matter what, but they still hadn't decided what to do after that.

Everyone had vaguely understood what it was that they needed to do, but they were hesitating to say it out loud.

They were waiting for the words from the leader who took up the challenge to fight this battle, Lux.

.

「—Everyone. Please listen. I think everyone has understood it already, but this is something important.」

Exactly two hours after they started resting,

Lux stood in front of the bonfire in the middle and addressed his many comrades while looking around at them.

Alma, Magialca, and their subordinates in the Azure Division. The Seven Dragon Paladins. Lisha, Syvalles, and the army of the New Kingdom.

Even the Drag-Knights of the Four Great Nobles were staring at Lux while holding their breath.

「Just like I explained before, we will stop the Sacred Elipse that is connected to the central from resurrecting again. Things will be settled with that. Once the Sacred Eclipse's creation is stopped, it won't be able to start

again right away. We should have peace for several years at the maximum until it revives again.」

「.....」

It was a victory declaration that the world was saved.

And yet, the expression of the people who heard that didn't relax.

Those who weren't in the know had received an explanation during the break and learned the truth.

About the cruel reality that surrounded this world and the unprecedented threat looming over their heads.

「——But, it won't be nothing more than a temporary peace. We learned that truth in the abandoned capital of Guernica and forgot it before remembering it once more.」

Here Aeryl spoke as the representative of the Lords.

She gave an additional explanation as someone who knew about the history of the Ruins.

「Our memories were altered by the zeroth ruin, the Artifact Uroboros. By Fugil Arcadia. The White Hero of the beginning.」

「.....」

Even if Aeryl connected to the central of Avalon, Fugil also possessed the same authorization.

After all the battles were concluded, Fugil could just rewrite the program of Avalon and restart the production system of Sacred Eclipse.

「Why is this Fugil doing something like this? There should be other ways if he wanted to place the New Kingdom under his rule.」

One of the Four Great Nobles, Bugriser's niece, Nier asked with a puzzled look.

She was just an outsider who got dragged into this battle, but she was able to ask the question frankly because of that.

In response, Lux who knew about Fugil since the era of Old Empire as his little brother answered her.

「I don't know what is Fugil's true objective. But there is just one thing that I do know.」

That was.

「Fugil has reset this world—the New Kingdom many times over, waiting for the righteous ruler to appear.」

Fugil once said that it was the hero's job to save the weak.

Humans would harbor malice even towards their fellow humans and schem to rule over others.

When that malice, that authority, that violence reached the peak and became the greatest power without anything that could oppose it, Fugil would become the ally of the weak and assist their revolution.

Just like how he did with the people who were oppressed by the Old Empire.

Just like how he did with the Holy Arcadia Empire where the Lords originated from a long time ago.

Fugil had been living for an eternity repeating the same thing since several thousands of years ago.

Even Lux still wasn't really clear about his reason, but Fugil was perceiving the act he was doing as 『the hero's mission』 .

That was also the reason why he murdered Listelka when she intended to rule over others after obtaining Avalon.

「But if that's all there is to it, we can also let him do as he please.」

Magialca cut into the tense atmosphere and spoke while scratching her head.

「That guy is powerful. That Artifact, Uroboros is boasting nearly unbeatable abilities. Even when we, the Seven Dragon Paladins excluding Lux challenged him with everything we had, we still couldn't defeat him.」

「.....」

The inside of the snowing forest was enveloped in silence.

Everyone could guess the meaning behind Magialca's words.

An almost certain future of annihilation would be waiting for them if they fought Fugil.

And yet, Avalon would be taken back if they didn't fight. After that they would surely get their perception altered once more by Uroboros.

No, Aeryl alone might be killed because she was contracted with Avalon.

Fugil would return from installing the Grand Force in the Garden in four more hours in their estimation.

Everyone here would have to decide before that.

Would they fight, or escape?

Fugil wished to watch over the choice of the people themselves.

He wouldn't kill anyone as long as they didn't do anything aggressive.

That was why——

「I think that running away is also a realistic option. Or rather our chance of victory is slim if we choose to fight. Even if by some chance we found a way to overcome Uroboros, our chance of victory still won't reach twenty percent. Of course that calculation also hasn't taken into account the damage that we will receive.」

「We have this much battle strength on our side and you're saying our chance is only 20%.....-!」

Nier's colleague Dawla, the young man commanding the private soldiers of Zagha, one of the Four Great Nobles knitted his eyebrows.

He was a high ranked Drag-Knight, but he couldn't even put a scratch on Greifer and Mel of the Seven Dragon Paladins.

Right now the fighting strength of the whole world was amassed here. And yet Magialca said that their chance of victory was slim even with that. He was unable to believe her words.

「Yes, that's why, I wish to hear everyone's feeling. Should we fight or run away? We have these two choices——」

「.....」

Silence descended once more.

Obviously it would be better to defeat Fugil if they were looking at the long term.

If Avalon remained, the production device of Sacred Eclipse would also restart one day, and their memories would also get modified.

But, the risk if they challenged the battle to stop that was too great.

It was at that timing, the red haired girl, Rosa Granhide raised her hand.

「Can't we just destroy the device? Simply destroying the central's system should be possible if everyone here works together isn't it?」

「It feels strange now when I listen to Rosa returning to her normal way of speaking.」

Soffice's retort got ignored. It was Aeryl who answered Rosa's question.

「If you ask me whether it's possible to destroy only the device and then running away, yes it's possible. —But, it will take a lot of time, and on top of that I can't guarantee that the system will be beyond repair.」

「I agree with that. Even the treasure storage in the seventh Ruin, the Moon has some places that I cannot enter.」

Soffice also nodded at Aeryl's words.

「I see.」

Rosa nodded in acceptance. Then Lisha stood up.

「So—Lux. What are you planning to do?」

「I— I don't have any intention to force any of you to follow me. But.....」

「You will fight right? Against Fugil. Then I'll accompany you. There is no way I'll be able to endure enjoying a brief peace in the New Kingdom that doesn't have you in it.」

「Oi Krulcifer! Don't snatch another person's words! I was just about to say that!」

Lisha flared up at Krulcifer who nonchalantly cut in.

「Then let's take a vote. Those who can't fight, please evacuate to the royal capital within two hours from now. And then those who will fight together with him, remain here and prepare. It should be fine like that isn't it?」

Everyone nodded at Celis's suggestion.

There was no one who chose to go back among the main members of the Seven Dragon Paladins, Azure Division, and Syvalles.

「Then it's decided. In that case go enter the central of Avalon. You're going to listen to the story of this AI of Arshalia right? We need everything we can get to prepare countermeasures against Uroboros.」

「Indeed. Come on Nii-san, we're going to be busy.」

Lux, Aeryl, and Airi were chosen to be the members who would enter the central following Magialca's instruction.

The basis of this choice of members was whether they had a connection to the Ruins and could be chosen as a contractor or not in case something happened.

It didn't take long before the three of them were teleported into the central of Avalon.

The people who stayed behind split into two groups and began their preparations.

Part 3

「This is really baffling. Good grief.....」

The commander of the private soldiers of the Four Great Nobles who received a request from Queen Raffi and entered the ancient forest..... Dawla was speaking out his true feelings without even bothering to hide his conflicted mind.

There was a need for someone to manage the survivors from the Azure Division and the New Kingdom's army, so they parted from Lux's group and got entrusted with the role to retreat while carrying the wounded and those who chose not to fight with them.

「What? You're only grumbling now? You're going to make me laugh seeing you acting timid with that grim face so stop it.」

The strong-willed Nier who was also a commander of equal rank responded to Dawla's words with an exasperated look.

「I don't care even if you interpret my words like that. I don't even have the mental leeway to get along with your prattling right now.」

「Well, it's not like I don't understand what you mean. I'm also feeling the same.」

The two of them were skilled Drag-Knights who managed to reach EX-class.

But, they themselves were aware that they weren't worthy to remain in that place.

It wasn't because they were handily defeated by Greifer and Mel of the Seven Dragon Paladins that was defeated by Fugil.

It also wasn't because they were getting cold feet because their side was in too much disadvantage.

They were simply—feeling that they didn't have enough resolve.

Although they were the subordinates of the chief vassals in the New Kingdom, their direct involvement with everything that had been going on was just too thin.

「We didn't know anything. We didn't know about the existences of that kind of powerful people, or even their resolves when challenging a battle.」

Dawla's words were filled with a flood of emotions.

Humans could fight if they had a just cause, or a sense of duty, or benefit before their eyes.

But he had just learned how one's own resolve would be tested when challenging a difficult situation with a slim chance of victory.

One wouldn't be able to challenge Fugil unless they also had the strength of heart to accompany their exceptional strength.

They would only increase the number of meaningless sacrifices if they challenged Fugil without such resolve.

Everyone here had judged that they would only end up like that in this battle.

That was also the judgment of these two skilled Drag-Rides who were able to know their own place.

「My own immaturity, is it? I thought that I was already aware of it, but it's frustrating to know that I am even more immature than I thought. I have to train a lot more when I return.」

「.....You're still disgusting even when putting up a laudable act like that you know?」

Dawla quipped at Nier's monologue, but she ignored that and asked.

「Hey? Which side do you think will win? Will it be Fugil Arcadia? Or will it be the New Kingdom's chore prince and the others——」

「I can't even imagine it. But.....」

Based on from what they had heard until now, from nine out of ten they wouldn't be able to win against Fugil even if they gathered all their forces.

That was just how immeasurable the Drag-Knight called Fugil and Uroboros were.

But even while thinking that, Dawla deliberately said a different answer.

「Either way, pursuing the righteous path of human as a king will be a difficult path.」

「.....hah」

Nier reflexively snorted.

The two of them were young and energetic newcomers who often acted conceitedly, but they recognized it.

They recognized that Lux and Lisha were worthy to bear the New Kingdom on their shoulders.

What decided a battle would be the total strength of both sides. Resource and strategy meant everything.

But, there was also strength produced from the power of unity——

Lux's caliber of king that brought together even the people who were once his enemy.

The hero of beginning Fugil who had gone through countless deathly battles for thousands of years by himself.

The two of them understood that they were still too immature to measure the strength of those two.

Part 4

Meanwhile—— Fugil used his own authority as a Lord to install the Grand Force at the deepest part of Garden.

With this——the seven Ruins were activated and both Avalon and Uroboros could now activate Endless.

That was to say, the preparation to carry out world scale modifications of everyone's perception starting from the New Kingdom was finished. Now the memories of everyone could be reset.

The majority of the energy inside all the Ruins had been exhausted because of all the intense battles in this half year.

He would need to hide the existence of the Ruins themselves and then guide the people and Drag-Knights after the Ruins got discovered by the people of this era once more.

He would also need to revive the Automatons and entrust them with the management of the Ruins after resetting their memories too.

In these thousands of years, each time he modified history he would return the situation to slightly back in the past before letting the hands of the clock move forward once more.

He carried out this act with the smoothness of someone who had repeated this for countless times.

He also had no hesitation about what he would carry out after this.

「.....I'll have the Gear Leader tidy up this room later.」

Fugil stopped by the treasure storage that was managed by Garden's Gear Leader, Clan Lieze and checked the inside.

A data chip was taken from here when Lux came to rescue the captured Aeril.

It was a recording medium that for some reason Fugil was unable to check even with the authorization he had.

He also didn't know who left the data chip here.

It was information that Fugil couldn't reach even during these thousands of years of him accomplishing his mission.

「It won't change anything even if I watch it at this point.」

Fugil let out a self-depreciating laugh and exited the storage.

He hid the main body of the zeroth Ruin Uroboros in the Ancient Forest and left its management to the Automata Arshalia.

He traveled here using an EX Wyvern. Because of that it would take slightly longer until he arrived at the Ancient Forest.

「.....」

He had no need to rest his body, but he used some time to reset the function of Garden.

Beside him he could see the illusion of Arshalia.

「Illusion..... I wonder since when I started seeing this.....?」

Perhaps it was since several hundred years ago.....no, Fugil who had been living for eternity and repeatedly altered history until now had already lost track of the passing of time.

But, even when the Sacred Eclipse didn't respond to Fugil's heart, even when the Automata Arshalia wasn't at his side, he would still be able to see

and hear her illusion.

Part 5

「Lux-kun. It's starting.....!」

「Yeah. Aeril.」

At the center of Avalon, in the middle of a room that was surrounded by silver walls and countless gears, Aeril called out Arshalia's AI using the authority that was built into the data chip.

The figure in dress floated up in 3D projection. It looked toward Lux, Aeril, and Airi with a smile.

Lux and Aeril had watched the recording in one of Avalon's facilities, the Archive. But El Fajura's obstruction destroyed the playback device and stopped them from talking more with the AI.

Now they were going to watch the continuation from there in order to form a countermeasure for Fugil and Uroboros.

「The Automatons had been acting extremely rude. But please don't blame them. They are just completely focused to their duty of protecting the Ruins because their feelings for me are too great.」

Arshalia's projection first apologized about what happened in the Archive.

At that time they were in the middle of talking about Fugil's past, the start of romance between him and Arshalia, and the history of Arcadia Empire. Lux was planning to ask the AI about the continuation of that story, but,

「Arshalia-san, about that. Can you tell us first about the weak point of Fugil and Uroboros?」

Airi changed the plan and asked frankly.

She must be thinking that they had no time to follow the story step by step.

—But, Arshalia's projection answered her with an ephemeral smile.

「How frank. However, I'm truly sorry but I have no advice that I can give you regarding that matter.」

「——」

Lux could hear Aeryl and Airi beside him getting their breath taken away.

It told him how shocked they were even though they must have been imagining the possibility of that in their heart.

「The zeroth Ruin, Artifact Uroboros made up the majority of Avalon. It is an ultimate weapon that is equipped with all abilities and technologies. That's why I don't know if it has any weak point other than its large energy consumption. There is also how my main body died before I could give it a test run.」

「.....」

The Automata Arshalia who was lurking somewhere around here might be lie if she was the one they talked with in this place, but the AI in this projection didn't look like she would intentionally lie to them.

They had imagined that this might be the case after witnessing that phenomenal strength. Even if they still had Singlen here and all of them fought together at full power, it still would be difficult to win against Fugil and Uroboros.

「Nii-san. As I thought..... shouldn't we consider retreating from here?」

Airi pulled at Lux's hand with an uneasy expression.

Even fighting Fugil was already extremely reckless in itself, but now it had come to light that the enemy had no clear weakness that would bring them victory if they managed to take advantage of it. It made Airi to feel discouraged.

「Certainly.....there is no reason to fight if we don't even have any chance of victory. Even if Sacred Eclipse will get revived, but it's still later in the future.」

Aeril also added her words, but Lux didn't look daunted at all.

「——I understand. Then can I ask you to explain about Uroboros and Fugil's abilities in detail? I will derive their weakness by myself from there.」

「.....Wait, Nii-san!？」

「Lux-kun!？」

Airi and Aeril raised their voice after hearing what Lux said.

Lux smiled to reassure the two of them and lightly caressed Airi's head.

「Don't worry, I'm not going to fight without thinking of the consequences.」

「Is Nii-san saying that there is a chance of victory? That's reckless——」

Airi flared up to Lux, but he had a conviction inside himself.

「Fugil isn't an unbeatable existence by any means. I understand that from how he killed Singlen.」

If Fugil and Uroboros were really in the realm of god, they would have no need to do something like killing their opponent just to make sure.

In other words, Fugil thought of Singlen as 『someone who might kill him if he didn't kill him first』, that was why he killed him in order to make sure such possibility didn't happen.

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「——My wise younger brother? Do you understand why someone with as much talent as you can't win against a superior Drag-Knight?」

Seven years ago—when Lux had just obtained a Drag-Ride, he thoroughly learned about the basics of offense and defense before he got into a mock battle against a military officer that Fugil introduced to him.

Lux overwhelmed the opponent with his unparalleled dynamic vision and piloting skill, but he was unable to defeat his opponent decisively because of the difference in Drag-Ride specs.

「Was it because.....my Drag-Ride is a Wyvern, while my opponent was using an EX Wyvern? Facing an opponent who was wearing a strengthened general-purpose Drag-Ride with heavier armor, I wasn't able to break the barrier easily due to the difference in our weapon's output.」

In addition, his opponent was also a skilled pilot who showed no opening.

The opponent was a strong person who piloted a strong Drag-Ride skillfully.

Lux thought that there would be no way to overturn that difference as long as he didn't change the Drag-Ride he was using itself.

「I can't hand over my Divine Drag-Ride to you as long as you are still thinking like that.」

But at that time Fugil laughed off Lux's answer quietly.

「There isn't anything like an unbeatable existence in this world. But you will never lose as long as you can make your opponent think so. Do you understand why I made you learn defense and analyzing the opponent?」

「.....Is it for, making me observe the enemy's movement?」

「That's right. With your eyes you will soon understand. Learn a way of fighting for finding the opponent's weak point. Someone who can learn and understand his enemy during a fight— will become the strongest Drag-Knight.」

「Is that, from Fugil-niisan's own experience?」

「Yeah. My way of thinking in the past was the opposite of that, but I reached such conclusion in the end. Even a mighty enemy who looks unbeatable at a glance is hiding a weak point. There isn't anyone who has no weak point.」

.

「.....」

Thinking back now, at that time Fugil wasn't talking about the Old Empire era when he was talking about the 『past』, he must be talking about the time before that—about his experience when Arshalia was still alive.

Kill before you are killed— people tended to think that the best plan for survival on the battlefield was to always be the one taking the initiative, but in a battle between Drag-Knights where fatal wounds could be avoided because of the barrier, it was impossible to easily defeat a strong warrior with a skill that surpassed a certain line.

But, if someone could ascertain their weak point and sharply pressed on it.

Furthermore, if they could pilot an even better Drag-Ride with enough skill—

A Drag-Ride who was extremely close to be the strongest would be born.

After that Lux obeyed Fugil's advice and polished his heart, body and skill under the oath of destroying the Old Empire.

There was no opponent who didn't have a weak point. And—even that Fugil wasn't an exception.

Lux wasn't simply swallowing Fugil's words without doubt, this was also a conviction that Lux obtained from all his battles.

He was able to obtain the proof for his conviction through watching Singlen's battle in the abandoned capital.

(That final battle of the Seven Dragon Paladins in the abandoned capital. A chance of victory is hidden within that battle where Fugil was cornered to such an unprecedented degree.)

He wouldn't notice any weak point if there wasn't any strong warrior that rivaled Fugil appeared.

Therefore, Lux decided to prepare tactics.

He resolved himself to bring everything that Fugil had taught him and he had trained until now into the fight against Fugil.

『.....That's everything. Then, my role is over with this.』

The AI Arshalia said that after she finished telling all the information about Fugil and Uroboros to Lux.

After this Lux and the others would have to plan the countermeasures as well as making preparations for all sorts of things.

They would also have to rest in a safe place if they wanted to recover their stamina.

They had no leeway with their time, and yet Lux still asked about a certain matter.

「I have, just one last question.」

Lux sorted the information inside his head, straightened his posture, and took a deep breath.

「Can you tell me about the incident that made Sacred Eclipse run wild and Fugil's conclusion?」

『.....』

He heard about Fugil's past in the Archive before this.

The abominable history that was born from the Holy Arcadia Empire.

The pureblood nobles of Arcadia who received the cooperation of the Xfer and climbed to the top of the world treated their people as labor while oppressing them and even sucking their life.

The nobles created the Abyss, made them eat humans, and created Elixir from there. They monopolized that Elixir and planned to make their dominance even more unshakable—and called those who rebelled against them as 『the clan of traitor』 .

In such a mad era, Arshalia who was purported as the goddess of salvation discovered the virtuous heart inside Fugil who was despised as someone from the clan of traitors, and so she picked him up.

The two of them built an emotional bond with each other while fighting against war and schemes, against any kind of oppression like the unreasonable exploitation of the people and the discrimination.

And then peace came for a time, but the battle didn't end even then.

The clan of traitors that had tasted suffering from the long years of war saw an opening and planned revenge toward the Lords. The people with weak standing who were born because of the war got used once more and became sacrifices.

To save everyone was something that was completely impossible even for Arshalia and Fugil.

Arshalia created Sacred Eclipse and Uroboros for the sake of those people who couldn't be saved.

Uroboros's world revision—it was a device to manipulate people's perception, so that they could forget the grudge from the long years of war and take back their human conscience.

The Sacred Eclipse was a device to project the will of the people. It would sense the resentment of people who weren't rewarded and visit them in order to grant them salvation.

The two's dream was to remove 『despair』 from 『human's world』 .

They swore to each other that they would continue to try making that dream came true.

「I, we still remember until that point.....」

Lux looked straight toward Arshalia's projection and questioned her once more.

「But, I want to know about the story beyond that point. How did Sacred Eclipse that should be saving people end up as something like that? Why is Fugil living in that kind of way? I want you to tell me the continuation of that story and its conclusion.」

The projection^{Arshalia} fell silent for a moment toward that question.

She quietly looked down and showed a thinking gesture.

『.....To be honest, I'm at a loss.』

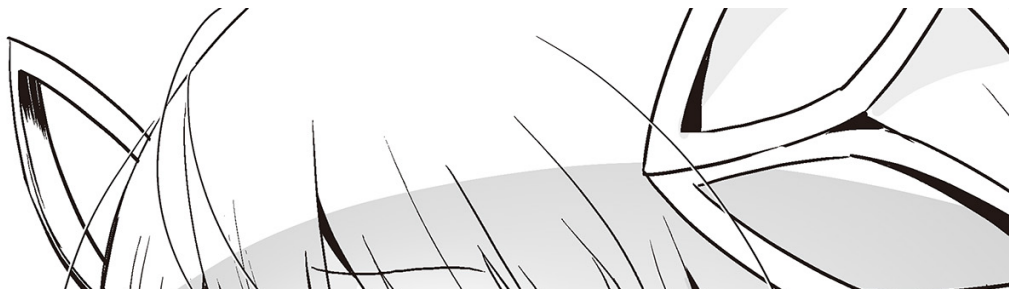
「Why is that? After coming this far——」

Airi pointed out, but Arshalia slowly opened her eyes.

『I don't know if it will be better or not, for you all to know the truth..... Won't you become hesitant when defeating Fugil.....no』

She said that in hesitation. But Arshalia lifted up her face in the end.

『Even so, I have to tell everything. In order to reach the conclusion that I've been hoping for all this time.』





Episode 2 – The Fated Rematch

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Part 1

「.....」

Fugil Arcadia never had a dream.

He had been living without sleeping for so many years that he couldn't even remember when the last time he was sleeping.

He had brushed with death and got Elixir administrated to him so many times. It reached the point he obtained a power to a degree that originally it wouldn't be strange for his body to break down.

That was why, he came to see illusion instead of dream.

It was a scene from more than a thousand years ago.

In order to sever the chain of revenge that kept being repeated, in order to erase the hatred in people's hearts that were born from the long ravages of war—.

In order to create a peaceful world for human by human's hands, Fugil and Arshlia wished for a new power.

Sacred Eclipse and Uroboros.

They decided to lead the world to salvation with those two powers as the focal point.

Fugil received surgery in order to be able to control the Artifact Uroboros and became a hero. He fell asleep after the surgery.

His body should be able to control Uroboros after he slept for a month.

『Fugil, do your best. I'll also do my best to complete the Sacred Eclipse before you wake up.』

『You're planning to stay all night again? Don't collapse before I wake up and making me take care of you.』

Fugil and Arshalia had that talk in front of the surgery room deep inside the Garden.

Fugil was already aware that he was becoming inhuman, but such thing didn't bother him.

Because there was the existence of this girl called Arshalia who he could trust from the bottom of his heart.

Because there was their dream to lead the people into an eternal peace.

They had great hopes inside their chest.

『Forget about that—is it really going to be okay? You don't need to go as far as saving them too.』

「You're saying that? You yourself is also an example of the clan of traitor.」

Arshalia laughed off Fugil's worry.

Not long ago, the clan of traitor planned to carry out act of terrorism as revenge for the oppression they had received until now. They wished to retaliate by sacrificing the Lords to create Elixir.

In the end Fugil sniffed out their plan and prevented their revenge while it was still in its infancy. Right now those people were under house arrest where Arshalia was attempting to persuade them.

Though in Fugil's opinion it would be better to give them the proper punishment instead of trying to reform them by talking to them.

『Even they aren't bad people by nature. Their hearts are simply frayed from the long years of hurtful life. You yourself is the living proof of that.』

『Things won't go well all the time with just those pretty words.』

That too was the harsh reality that Fugil and Arshalia had finished experiencing.

There were people who were beyond saving no matter how many words they spent to convince them.

『That's why, our current plan exist in order to save that kind of people. Please come back safely, Fugil. I together with the Sacred Eclipse that I'm going to create will be waiting for your return.』

『.....』

Arshalia's expression looked lonely right now even though she was usually bright and stout-hearted. The cause must not be just from the powerful modification surgery that Fugil would go through.

It was unclear whether he would be able to return safely.

But more than that, she was also feeling uneasy about their plan right now.

That uneasiness—was something that Fugil also understood well after directly witnessing all the harsh realities until now together with her.

『Don't make that kind of face. You've decided to do this right?』

『Of course. Even if our plan this time doesn't go well, there is meaning in continuing our effort to make our dream come true.』

Fugil gently held Arshalia's arm. It made her smile and she spoke firmly.

『If we don't give up trying to make a peaceful world....., if we can change the working of this world—surely we will be able to reach it one day. After all it will be the end if we give up.』

She clenched her fist strongly and opened the glass capsule that would be used for the surgery.

Fugil entered inside without hesitation before she closed the door.

He could still hear Arshalia's voice from the speaker inside the capsule.

『Please swear to me. That you will continue chasing our dream to lead the world of human into peace—. That oath will become my courage until you wake up.』

『Yeah..... I guess, I'll swear it Arshalia. The next time I open my eyes—you will have completed the Sacred Eclipse and become this goddess of salvation for real.』

『Yes, the next time I meet you—you will have become the hero of the beginning who can control the Uroboros. Let's do our best, together.』

After exchanging those words at the end, Fugil received the surgery inside the capsule and fell asleep.

The two of them swore to save the world. After this they would nurture their dream into reality while holding a new hope in their heart.

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—But, unfortunately the tale ended here.

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When the tale of a hero, or rather a human was concluded with their death, a single tale vanished starting from this point and a new one began.

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Part 2

After Lux, Aeril, and Airi were teleported to the central of Avalon. Tillfur, one of the members who were remaining on the surface were lying down on a blanket that was spread in front of the bonfire while muttering.

Around her everyone was resting their body in front of the bonfire. The repair of the Drag-Rides of their main fighting force had finished.

They estimated that there would still be hours at the earliest until Fugil returned.

But it was hard to say whether that estimate was absolutely correct. The Automata Arshalia was also still in good health. They couldn't let their guard down.

Of course Magialca's aide Lolotte was on guard using his Drake to watch the surrounding, but—.

「There is nothing to do while waiting for the battle to start. I also can't sleep.」

「No. I never imagined such line will come from someone who had been asleep until just now.」

「I didn't sleep! I tried to, but I was unable to fall asleep!」

Tillfur objected at Noct's retort.

「You two, be quiet. I understand that you two are worried about those three, but don't make a ruckus.」

The leader of the Triad, Sharis pacified them down like that. But she herself understood well how they were feeling.

Thanks to Lisha tuning their Drag-Rides to match their skill, they were now able to equip strengthened type general-purpose Drag-Ride. Even so their strength was still far below the Seven Dragon Paladins.

They were even a level below Nier and Dawla who had left just now.

From the beginning they intended to focus on giving support in the battle against Fugil.

But, if they were unable to do anything even then.

If they instead became a hindrance for Lux and others, the main force—.

They were fearing that possibility more than dying in battle.

However.

「Stop thinking about that after coming this far, Tillfur. Have you already forgotten what he said?」

「I remember. Haa, I'm happy to hear those words. But still, it gives you a complicated feeling isn't it?」

Before Lux entered the central—he met with the Triad during the break time and talked with them for a bit.

『Thank you for choosing to stay here. Can I leave Airi to you three?』

He told them that with a pained but also happy smile.

We might not be able to do much though, the three of them replied to him modestly—or perhaps they were simply speaking the truth. But in respond,

『Even so, I'm feeling encouraged just from having the three of you here.』

—They exchanged such conversation.

「Lux-chi is really a handful. It's really troubling because he did that without any awareness of what he was doing. I can understand how the girls who are helped by his words can fall in love with him. He should be thankful for having friends like us who are able to make the distinction.」

Tillfur grumbled while using her hands as pillow under her head.

「You say that, but it's completely visible that you aren't able to make the distinction.」

Noct instantly retorted with a blank stare.

「Shaddup! I'm pretending that I can make the distinction here! I'll harbor hope if I don't do that.....」

Sharis smiled at Tillfur's yell that contained sorrow somewhere inside.

「However, we can joke around like this until the end. I have good friends.」

「Yes. Though you can also call this as us lacking any tension.」

Sharis hugged the black haired girl who was still cool and collected even now from behind.

「You too Noct, you have to survive until the end. If you do that then you just might have a chance.」

「You mean being a mistress—. But I think with Lux-chi's personality even that might be difficult.」

「.....Why are you giving up the path of being the legal wife?」

「Even though you know why even without me telling you—. Everyone is just too powerful, you know.」

Tillfur hung her head down in respond to Noct's question while staring toward the other side of the bonfire.

The five girls who were the core members of Syvalles were sitting close to each other.

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「Really, those three. They are lacking tension even now. Do they really understand that we are going into a battle with no chance of victory after this.....」

Lisha listened to the conversation of the Triad who thought they were talking with small voices while sighing.

「Do you really think so? Then as the queen of the new kingdom, shouldn't you go back for the sake of the people in case the worst happen?」

Krulcifer asked Lisha mischievously. Lisha puffed up her cheeks in discontent to that.

「Krulcifer. You shouldn't say something mean like that. Everyone here is accompanying Lux with the same feeling.」

Celis said to calm Lisha as the senior here, so Krulcifer also obediently stopped pushing.

「I know that this will be a battle with low chance of victory. However, this is our only choice in order to take back the true peace where the Sacred Eclipse won't revive anymore. I was just saying that the fate waiting for us in case we are defeated would be something like that.」

Lisha folded her arms and looked down while saying that.

「Besides——」

「You want to fight beside Lu-chan until the very end. No matter what happens after this.」

「I understand that.」

Philuffy who was looking up to the snowing sky during the conversation muttered that. Yoruka also nodded.

「Aruji-sama is needing us for the battle that he desires. There is no greater honor for a servant than this.」

「Honor, is it.....」

Yoruka spoke with a bewitching smile. In contrast Krulcifer was sending a doubtful stare toward her.

「You are calling yourself a servant, but it doesn't look like that you are making the right distinction at all. No matter how I look at you, it only looks like you are following Lux-kun based on your personal feeling.」

「It seems you have figured me out. But please rest assured, from the start it is my intention to be allowed to serve Aruji-sama as one of his concubines.」

「Wha-.....!」

Yoruka's excessively frank confession made the three around her to be speechless from the astonishment.

Philuffy was the only one whose expression was staying absentminded as usual.

「What is so surprising? I don't know who it is, but there was someone else other than me who entered a romantic relationship with Aruji-sama during that repeated three days of parade wasn't it?」

From the perspective of Yoruka who had come to a clear decision that she would become Lux's concubine, her words just now might not bear any significance for her.

However, it caused the remaining three girls who possessed normal ethics to raise their voices in panic.

「Wait! The way you said that.....it's like you're saying that Lux would enter a romantic relationship with different person each time our memories got reset by Uroboros's world revision!」

The remaining four reacted when Lisha hit upon the truth.

「As I thought, that wasn't a dream. Lux really told me that he loves me——」

Celis's cheeks blushed red and her arms hugged her body tightly.

Her large breasts got emphasized even with the pilot suit enveloping her body.

「I also remember it. How Lux-kun chose me in that parade——」

After Celis, Krulcifer also muttered with her usual calm expression crumbling down. Her tone sounded somewhat intoxicated like a girl who was dreaming.

「Me too. I remember Lu-chan came to visit me when I was sick, and told me he loved me.....」

「As for me, Aruji-sama recognized me as a human——」

Lisha finally couldn't endure it and exploded the instant Philuffy and Yoruka also continued with their own comment.

「Eei, shut up! Even if what you four said really did happen, it was all in the past! Thinking realistically, it's obvious that I'm taking priority because I'm the latest one!」

Lisha claimed loudly. But the eyes of her surrounding looked at her grimly.

「I heard you mentioning it before this, but Lux-kun was only telling you that he loves you, however it wasn't like he was asking you to go out or marry with him right? Perhaps Lux-kun was only saying that he loves you as a princess.」

「You're seriously a sore loser.....! Love is obviously prioritized in everything. I've already decided that with my authority as the princess!」

「You're going to use your princess authority for the first time for that.....」

Celis muttered with a bewildered face toward Lisha who lost her temper.

However even Krulcifer didn't show any sign of backing off. She dealt with Lisha with a very composed look.

The Triad was watching that childish conversation from the other side of the bonfire.

「This is....., I thought that it had been decided already, but it looks like there is still a chance.」

「Yeah..... Really, that Lux-chi, he is a real playboy. But wait, if only the loop continued longer then perhaps even I might possibly——」

「I don't think there would be any chance for that Tillfur. As expected it's impossible.」

「Shaddup! I know that! I'm not the match of those girls over there anyway!」

Sharis caressed the head of the pouting Tillfur with a conflicted expression.

Other than them, the Seven Dragon Paladins and Alma were also watching the quarrel with complicated expression.

「I thought that Ane-ue is quite serious as a person but.....」

「Well, that's Lux's fault. After all he is a natural lady-killer. Everyone will become like that after getting saved by that guy.」

Magialca casually replied with a hearty laugh while getting drunk alone.

Mel sighed out white breath beside Magialca after hearing that.

「.....Well, it's not like I don't understand their feeling. Although it was indirectly, I was also helped by Onii-chan so——」

「Is it also possible to go out with that young man within the framework of friend? If I remember right there is also that kind of relationship between friends.....」

「That's a mistaken interpretation so come back to your senses. Everyone will doubt the personality of Key's Supervisor if you act like that you know?」

Mel chided the mutter that Soffice leaked out. Then Rosa twisted her body with an expression of ecstasy.

「As for me I'll simply accomplish my rolee. Aa, if I manage to survive this battle safely then I'll place myself under that person——」

「Your surface and hidden personality are jumbled there.....」

Rosa's personality that kept switching in a fickle manner made Magialca exasperatedly stared at her with a put off gaze.

Slightly behind her, Greifer was lying down acting like it wasn't his business.

「By the way captain, what is that behind you.」

Greifer's gaze zeroed toward the Drag-Ride behind where Magialca was lying down.

The Divine Drag-Ride Jormungandr.

It was the Drag-Ride that Magialca owned and used in the past, but now it was just a useless object after she was rendered invalid with no hope of recovery as a Drag-Knight. She once handed it to Lux.

「Hm? Ah..... This thing is in the middle of tuning right now so that even that girl can use it. I wish there is more time, but it can't be helped.」

「Are you up to your usual trick again?」

「Don't make me sounds like a villain like that.」

Magialca pouted her mouth seeing Mel's dubious expression.

It was a peaceful atmosphere that was unthinkable coming from people who were going to challenge a battle with almost no chance of victory. Everyone passed the time like that while smiling wryly—but.

.

Rustle.

.

Suddenly they heard rustling sound from a nearby thicket. All of them gasped in surprise.

A silver haired girl wearing pilot suit—the Automata Arshalia was there.

.

Part 3

「And.....what happened in the past with Fugil and you?」

Inside the central that was surrounded with silver walls and countless gears—.

Aeril looked puzzled at the sudden silence and raised her voice.

Arshalia was talking until she reached the point where Fugil entered a hibernation pod to receive the strengthening surgery by readministering Elixir into him. But suddenly the AI's projection stopped moving.

「My apologizes. I became wary because I sensed some movement on the surface. But Fugil still hasn't returned. I'll continue my story.」

「.....」

The three of them became curious about what happened outside, but first they had to finish listening to this story first either way.

They held their breath while waiting for her to resume her story.

「If I speak from the conclusion, Fugil's surgery was a success, while my main body—the original Arshalia died.」

「.....tsu」

Airi slightly staggered beside Lux hearing that.

The person who became the model of Sacred Eclipse—the princess and scientist Arshalia died. She had faintly imagined that result, but it was still a shock to hear it clearly.

Because if they believed the AI's story, then Arshalia was someone who fought to save the people in the era of warfare that happened more than a thousand years ago.

Sacred Eclipse, the device that originally should be saving all the people had poison mixed into it and became a weapon of massacre at the present.

Lux had also known about that matter from the fragmentary words that Fugil muttered.

But, this was the first time that he would be able to learn about the story in full.

「——Let's go back for a bit. I will begin from the situation before it.」

Arshalia's projection said that as the preface with a bow.

「Arcadia Empire had regained peace for a moment. However, the hatred of other ethnic group and the clan of traitor was bone deep. Their family was taken away and killed, and even they themselves had their dignity and function as human destroyed. The world was almost swallowed in the flame of war once more because those people wished to avenge themselves. At that time I imprisoned the terrorists from the clan of traitor, but I was at a loss of how to deal with them.」

「.....」

Apparently those terrorists were from a faction that was radical even among the clan of traitor.

In the old empire there were also many insurrections occurring. In the end all of them got suppressed, but the grudge of the rebel army toward the old empire was something fierce.

It was already like that even with the old empire, so it wasn't hard to imagine about the happening in the empire more than thousands years ago where the chain of hatred had continued for even longer.

Hayes and her family must be the Lords that appeared several generations after that.

「It was selfish of me but, I tested the method of salvation using Uroboros's world revision on them whose hands had already been bloodied. What if I erase everything before that—the hatred that they inherited from their parents and grandparents, and the trace of wrath that remained in the country—if all those things are gone from inside them? I subjected them under the world revision with such thought. But.....」

Uroboros and Sacred Eclipse were created in order to put a stop a new chain of revenge from forming.

Uroboros was for rewriting human's perception, to reform the knowledge and memories of the people that were driving them toward destruction.

The Sacred Eclipse was for bestowing power to overturn the situation toward those who strongly wished for salvation.

「But——？」

.

Part 4

「.....」

Silver walls completely surrounded the room.

Fugil was reminiscing about the tragedy that occurred in the Garden.

There was no one in front of him when he opened his eyes inside the hibernation pod.

It was deathly quiet inside the room.

Fugil took the clothes and coat that were placed nearby along with Uroboros's Sword Device and exited the pod.

『My legs, arms, body, all of them move well.....I'm also feeling good.』

It seemed the strengthening of his body by making it accustomed to a lot of elixir succeeded.

Heat was rising from every single cell of his body as though there was an aura covering him.

He had no fear about surrendering his body to Arshalia's hand.

After going through battle for years, he had come to put his faith full on her technology. And even if this surgery ended in failure in the worst case—then he would have no regret.

Their wish was to lead this hopeless world into peace.

In other words, they wished to change the law where the strong would continue taking away from the weak.

It was her who had fought more than anyone in order to sever the chain of revenge and hatred.

The two of them, Fugil and Arshalia made this gamble in order to make their dream come true.

『Troublesome girl. Even though she said that it was her role to wake me up, she isn't here right now like this.....』

Fugil jokingly complained inside the quiet space.

With Arshalia wasn't present at his awakening like this, Fugil might have already got a hunch that there was some kind of accident.

However, he was unable to notice it at that time.

Because Fugil—believed in her somewhere in his heart.

He had witnessed countless tragedy until now after fighting in this extremely chaotic era.

Even so, he would be able to protect what was truly important for him no matter what. He completely believed that somewhere in his heart.

『Arshalia.....?』

This surgery room inside the Garden was still in a locked state from the outside, but there was a single girl sitting near the wall.

『System has finished rebooting. You are—who deyagarimasu?』

The name of this automata with goat horns growing from her head was Clan Lieze.

Fugil had spoken with her several times before he went asleep. They were acquainted.

『Why is your memory reset? Where did Arshalia go?』

『Please wait for a bit. I will download my memory before my destruction and searching life signal inside the Garden deyagarimasu—. Aa....., I see. So that happened.』

『What is going on? Is Arshalia safe?』

『.....Fugil, first prepare to fight. The Sword Device you have right now is for Uroboros. It's too big and cannot be transferred into this room.』

『I'm not asking you that. Where is Arshalia?』

『That's—.....tsu, the enemy has found us.』

『The damn door is opened..... You are that so called hero! The damn Automata is also revived even though it should be destroyed.』

There was the sound of the door opening. Then a familiar man entered inside.

This man was tyrannized by the Lords in the past and held a grudge. He was—the terrorist who planned to take revenge to them and stole the Elixir.

But, he was subjugated by Fugil in the middle of his planning and he should be imprisoned underground the imperial capital.

Why was one of the terrorists inside this Garden?

He didn't understand.

But, Fugil's body moved before he could think.

『Oi! I found a survivor! Restrain this guy and interrogate him! The way to control that Sacred Eclipse—』

The man said that and summoned a Wyvern that he equipped.

In contrast Fugil had no space to summon Uroboros inside this room. He was in a desperate situation.

Or that was how it should be, but—.

『Fugil! Run away deyagarimasu! I will stay behind—』

『.....Too slow.』

The man in front of Fugil rushed forward with his Wyvern to capture Fugil.

The enemy had rushed forward for several tenths of seconds, but it looked like he wasn't moving at all in Fugil's eyes.

His five senses perceived the enemy. He estimated the Drag-Ride's next action by analyzing its preliminary movement.

His brain was working with a speed that couldn't be compared with the average human to choose the best action and carried it out.

『Ah』

Stab, the Wyvern's armored arm that was reaching out while it was charging grabbed empty air while in exchange the Sword Device of Uroboros that Fugil unsheathed pierced the barrier and its tip reached the opponent's arm.

The man's tendon was severed, removing his option to control the Drag-Ride. At the same time it caused intense pain that sealed his movement completely.

『GUh, AAAAH.....!』

The man dispelled his Drag-Ride from the shock and intense pain he felt.

Fugil twisted the man's unwounded arm and whispered into his ear.

『Why are you here when you should be in the prison? Where is Arshalia?』

『H-how can you do this, even though you aren't wearing any Drag-Ride.....GAAAAAH!』

Crack, Fugil snapped the man's arm like a dry twig before telling him coldly.

『Answer. I won't ask again.』

『O-over there..... Go out of this room and head to the deepest area——. Rather than that quick, we have to, search for the way to control that monster.....!』

『Monster.....?』

Fugil frowned at the man's incomprehensible statement.

And then he started walking toward the deepest room.

He cut down the patrolling Drag-Knights just like the first man and entered inside the room.

.

「W-what, you're.....!？」

「Don't tell me, you're the one inside that locked room——」

「I remember, this guy is the one who captured us a month ago, the hero's——」

.

Several terrorists were inside that room.

However, although Fugil's ears heard their voices, their words didn't register to his brain.

There was a dead body without limbs and eyes hanged at the center of the room.

The body had been carved, gouged, burned, melted, it had received every torture imaginable in this world and reduced into a broken lump of flesh.

That familiar silver hair. The scattered scraps of dress.

That was, that was undoubtedly. What was once Arshalia.

There were also fragments of machines scattered about. Most likely it was the remains of the Gear Leader when it was destroyed.

「Why is master.....!? No, first we have to eliminate them! Fugil, we should escape from here for now and seal the room to——」

Clan Lieze immediately suggested to retreat.

But, Fugil's body naturally moved while his heart was staying blank.

「Wha-, don't come here! We have Drag-Ride——gueh!」

Fugil unsheathed Uroboros's Sword Device. Its tip cut off the man's wrist at the same time.

When facing those who were already wearing their Drag-Ride, he would pierce the barrier and stabbed their chest.

「Ah, gu..... How, how can someone do something like this with only their flesh and blood body——」

Fugil felt how his body was turning superhuman.

The Elizir that had been administered into his body many times changed and evolved his flesh itself.

The strengthening surgery that he received at the end performed Baptism to his whole body. He obtained physical ability that surpassed even the average Abyss from that.

「Who....., who are you deyagarimasu? A, a flesh and blood human can't possibly do something like——」

「.....」

Clan Lieze's shocked words slipped through his ears without invoking any emotion.

Fugil decided to obtain superhuman body in order to use Uroboros.

He thought that he would still be able to fight with his heart staying human even if his body was becoming more and more inhuman.

However now——.

He thought it would be better if only his heart was also turning inhuman.

「I will download the recording of what happened in this room deyagarimasu. Fugil, wait for a bit.」

He could imagine what happened here even without watching the recording. And it was just as he thought, the recording only showed what he had already known.

The radical faction of the clan of traitor who continued to keep their grudge blazing even after peace had come——.

Their comrades who were captured so Arshalia could try reforming them, they became the lead to find this place. There was traitor among Fugil and Arshalia's comrades who helped them escape.

They worked together to obtain the Ruins——and even Avalon, and planned to rule the world.

Their plan was to control the greatest and strongest Ragnarok, Sacred Eclipse. They would order it to devour or kill those who were inconvenient for them, and used them as material to create Elixir. They would inject that Elixir into themselves so they could prosper.

They tried to force Arshalia to program the Sacred Eclipse to become a device that personified such greed of a tyrant.

「Apparently Arshalia-sama....., master didn't give in to them until the very end.」

「.....」

It was clear just from seeing this trace of torture.

Arshalia must have continued to refuse their demand no matter what kind of torture she was subjected to.

And then, she died.

After that these people tried to make use of the Sacred Eclipse. They tried rewriting the program but gave up at the middle, and then they searched for another way to freely control the Sacred Eclipse.

That was the picture of situation that Fugil obtained from the circumstantial evidence and the words that he forced out from the rebels.

「Damn it! Why are you getting in our way!?!」

There was only one man remaining from among the survivors.

This man from the clan of traitor was the one guiding the terrorists here. He was clamoring with his arms and legs restrained.

「We should have the right for it! We who were once oppressed and even had our brethren and family turned into material for Elixir should have the right to do the same thing back to those guys!」

「.....」

Even Fugil was once a member of the clan of traitor—.

He was a member of the organization that opposed the tyranny of the Lords, but he met Arshalia and learned that she was seeking for the true peace.

But, this man, these people—.

Even now after they were liberated from the tyranny, they were still caught by the pain of the past.

He kept hiding the desire for revenge in his heart even after Fugil and Arshalia accepted him as ally.

He was envious of the absolute authority of the Lords in the past.

That was why he opened the cage of the terrorists and schemed to snatch the right to rule.

Then he killed Arshalia using the opening that was created when Fugil went into long sleep.

The dream of the goddess of salvation who tried to save everyone was crushed here.

「—No, that's not it.」

Those words came out faster than Fugil could accept the reality.

「It's still not over yet. The Sacred Eclipse and Uroboros that you created are still here. The dream that the two of us saw—the dream to lead the world into peace by human's hand, is still not over yet.」

「Fugil.....?」

Beside him, Clan Lieze looked up at the face of her other master.

There was no color of sadness and pain in the face of this man who was called the hero of the beginning.

There was only emptiness remaining in it.

The Automata Clan Lieze had the thought, that there was nothing in his expression.

「Clan Lieze. Can you activate Sacred Eclipse here and now? Can you download its operating procedure?」

「Please wait a second..... It's possible. But....., Sacred Eclipse's program had been completed a month ago, but there is a trace of someone

tampering with it after that.」

Before Fugil went to sleep—Arshalia said that the program of Sacred Eclipse's action to project the will of human in this world had been completed.

In that case this sign of tampering must be the result from the attempt of the rebels from the clan of traitor to make their desire come true.

In other words, a part of Sacred Eclipse's behavior would become out of order because of the tampering.

「Which part of the program got altered?」

「The program to respond to ill will and.....attacking human. There is an additional function to steal human lives in proportion to the good deed that the Sacred Eclipse has accomplished. Most likely it's for the sake to make things balanced.」

Plus and minus.

People who felt regret due to the misfortune they encountered.

Sacred Eclipse would react to the resentment of such people, people who had things taken away from them, people who suffered, and granted them with the power in the form of Elixir.

Its standard for giving Elixir was based on the combined wishes of the people.

At the same time Sacred Eclipse would devour people in order to refine Elixir as well as obtaining energy for its activity.

It would react to the will of someone with rage and hatred or the heart of someone with strong killing intent and hostility and carried out slaughter.

The behavior at the later half was a function that didn't exist in the original version of the Sacred Eclipse, but—.

「Perhaps, that is the correct behavior instead.」

The Sacred Eclipse's basic principle was salvation based on the people's will.

It was started from the belief on the goodness that people had since they were born.

But, the reality wasn't so simple.

In that case—even if the will of people with malice mixed in and produced destruction and slaughter—it couldn't be helped.

「That's the choice of the people who rejected Arshalia. Activate it.」

「Roger deyagarimasu. Then——」

Cla Lieze obeyed Fugil's instruction and released the Sacred Eclipse.

The transparent door of strengthened glass opened and something targeted the prey with a speed that the eyes couldn't follow.

.

「——GI-SHAAAAAAAAAAH.....!」

「GYAAAAAAAAH!」

.

The humanoid Ragnarok with the same appearance like Arshalia used its fingers to pierce the throat of the terrorist that Fugil captured and tore it off.

It devoured the man and absorbed the energy in the blink of eye, but it showed no hostility toward Fugil.

However, it was smiling with the exact resemblance of Arshalia when she was alive.

「.....I see. So that guy is someone who should die just as I thought.」

「.....」

It was unknown whether the Sacred Eclipse detected Fugil's resentment and killed the man.

Because even Fugil himself already didn't understand what was going on in his heart.

It felt like he was returning to the empty him before he met Arshalia, where nothing mattered to him.

(Is this, the price of turning superhuman.....? I don't, feel anything.)

Was it the compensation from having his flesh and mind strengthened so that he could endure using the Artifact Uroboros? He was unable to even feel sadness even though he lost the girl who was the closest to him.

In exchange, he was becoming empty.

He felt like the heart that was moving his body was vanishing.

「Is it okay like this deyagarimasu? The Sacred Eclipse will act to keep the balance of the world while carrying out salvation and slaughter alternately. Each time someone stopped it from doing that, it will be restored by Avalon to come back to life even stronger.」

「I myself will do as planned. I'll find a king who is worthy to be entrusted with this Avalon and make him manage this world by human's hand. First I'll use Uroboros and erase the past history of slaughter. I'll have to temporarily erase your memory too. I don't want to grant humans unnecessary information.」

「So you will continue? Even without knowing whether this way is correct or wrong——」

「Yeah.」

Fugil nodded seriously to Clan Lieze's question.

The Sacred Eclipse in front of him mimicked Arshalia, projected Fugil's heart, and put together some words.

「You can surely do it, Fugil. After all it will be the end if we give up.」

「Yeah. You're right.」

He would arrive one day if he headed toward it.

He would be able to arrive at a world where all humans could be saved for eternity.

He would build the ideal world that the two of them wished for.

「If—it's hopeless even with that」

The Sacred Eclipse repeated Arshalia's words.

「If the hearts of the people are hurt and twisted, if they continue hurting others, if it has become really hopeless」

It was like an oracle for Fugil who would continue to chase their dream of salvation aloe from now on.

「Let's forget everything and redo it one more time.」

As though she was encouraging him.

「Let's start from the beginning once more. While believing that one day we will be able to come across such world.」

As though she was cursing him.

「Let's continue chasing the dream, believing that it's possible.」

「.....That was, our promise」

The words that slipped out from the corner of Fugil's lips had no emotion.

「Then, I will guide you to where Urobroos is deyagarimasu. To the Ancient Forest where Avalon is hidden—. Perhaps it will also be better to move it away from there eventually.」

「.....」

After that, using the perception manipulation by activating the world revision, he managed to make people forget the memories of hatred from the hundreds of years of fighting.

Peace came for a time, but the world revision consumed a lot of energy, on top of that there were also some people who recalled the past from the remaining records.

Those people remembered the existence of Ruins and sniffed around to search the locations. Fugil deployed the Abysses that were used by the Lords in the past in order to defend the Ruins and kept those people away.

Then finally, he began taking action for the sake of creating a future where Avalon could be entrusted to someone who possessed the qualification as king as Arshalia's replacement.

He continued watching the people of that era living their life. Observing the choices that they made and the wish that they had.

And then Fugil would become the ally of the weak.

When the balance of authority was crumbling, where the situation leaned to greatly favor the ruler while the weak was falling into a situation where they couldn't recover from, Fugil would take action to restore the balance once more.

The weak would replace the strong. Then when that replacement also started scheming to become a tyrannical ruler, he would take them down without anyone else knowing.

He alternately switched sides between the Lords and the clan of traitor.

There were also some eras where other country invaded and grasped the authority.

In order to leave behind the seed of each side, he would make some of them went into cold sleep and waited until they could make the right judgment.

He continued groping for new possibility.

.

But—even after a thousand years had passed, the hero that Fugil wished for, a successor that was worthy to obtain Avalon never appeared.

Before he realized even Fugil was becoming a part of the system of the world.

「Why? Would you still live if only you didn't save me at that time? Would you be able to continue living as one of the Lords without chasing after that dream that was beyond our grasp?」

He was coming to term with Arshalia's death as simply an accident.

But, if at the beginning she didn't pick up Fugil who was from the clan of traitor, perhaps she also wouldn't chase after that dream?

He was also coming to think like that.

The clan of rebels who were dyed with hatred and fury—the disturbing elements within the Holy Arcadia Empire.

Arshalia said that her heart was touched when she saw Fugil tried to save something even though he came from such background. She said that she found hope in the goodness of human will.

But, perhaps it was actually a mistake from the beginning?

In the end, human was nothing more than beast with intelligence.

They couldn't win against their greed and got dyed with it, leading them to their destruction. Wasn't that where all humans would end up in the end?

Before he realized it he came to think like that. Even so he continued repeating the plan to chase after the dream.

He fought, fought, fought, fought, fought.

Fugil kept fighting to reach the world of peace.

He almost died and revived, he repeated the history many times over, he miraculously received Baptism in the amount that would break ordinary people and became superhuman.

But even so, he was unable to save the world.

He didn't know whether the day would come that the Sacred Eclipse returned to its original function.

Even so, he had to keep repeating it.

Even if everything was just like building a sandcastle that would sooner crumble from the wave.

「After all, it will be the end if I give up.....」

When he spoke Arshalia's words, the scene that happened more than a thousand years ago vanished from the Garden.

The time to look back at the past was over.

「Let's go. To carry out my mission——」

.

And then, the hero returned to reality.

He flew back toward the Ancient Forest where Avalon was at.

Part 5

「You! What are you here for——!」

At the camp in the temple's ground.

While Lux, Aeryl, and Airi were entering the central underground this temple, the Automata Arshalia suddenly showed herself.

Lisha raised her guard seeing her and she immediately unsheathed her Sword Device.

However, the silver haired Automata didn't show any will to fight at all.

「Please don't misunderstand. I'm only coming here in order to persuade all of you. I also wish to tell this to the three who already entered inside, but please quickly leave this place. By the way, this body is a clone made from nanomachine, so there won't be any meaning even if you destroy it.」

Arshalia told them with a mechanical tone that wasn't filled with any particular emotion.

「I'm coming here simply to convey my request. If the Sacred Eclipse's activation has been stopped temporarily, it won't revive for several years at least. Even if after that you have your memories erased by Endless, you will be able to live in peace for a while.」

「.....」

Lisha was bewildered after listening to the intent of the Automata. Krulcifer lifted up her face beside her.

「So you are also someone who can't be talked with? No, perhaps that's because you're a robot. Do you think there is anyone here who will

obediently leave after being told that?」

「——」

The remaining members of Syvalles, Seven Dragon Paladins, and Azure Division nodded slightly in agreement with Krulcifer's words.

They were people who had decided just now to fight together with Lux.

It was impossible to make them leave at this point.

They displayed their will once more to the Gear Leader.

「I thought so. Perhaps I'm only doing something pointless.」

「Then, you should leave immediately. I won't permit even more nonsense coming from you.」

Celis also continued after Krulcifer and pressured the Automata clone, but——.

「That person is suffering. He has been so all this time since Princess Arshalia, the model of my appearance died.」

「.....」

The Automata suddenly changed the direction of the talk. Everyone there looked confused.

「Fugil's objective is to find a hero. He has continued searching for that thing that he was unable to become. After he became an immortal superhuman, he couldn't find any other wish than guiding this world.」

The Automata girl continued talking indifferently with no change in her blank expression.

「No one can stop Fugil who is completely bound by his curse. He will only suffer more if all of you are obliterated from opposing him.」

「So what are you sayingg? That we have to go along forever with this farce that man has kept repeating over and over by faking history—how laughable. Even though he isn't even thinking of us as fellow human that is equal with him.」

Rosa who had kept her mouth shut until now retorted with a fearless grin.

「That is really getting on the nerves isn't it? How he is only seeing people as guinea pig.」

Mel also continued right after Rosa and displayed her intent to keep fighting.

「Leave already if you get it! You won't get away unscathed if you keep disturbing our rest!」

Even Lisha's little sister, Alma pointed the tip of her Sword Device to Arshalia.

However here the Automata Arshalia showed a different reaction from before.

「Are you saying that all of you here could stop it? If Fugil didn't take action, it would be impossible to destroy the old empire. It was the same with Listelka, she almost ruled over the world if Fugil didn't stop her. Am I wrong?」

「.....What, do you want to say?」

Soffice asked back to the Automata with a dubious face.

「In the first place, weren't those guys planning to become absolute ruler because that Fugil and Sacred Eclipse lent them strength? Don't start spewing bullshit now.」

Greifer pointed out. However Arshalia turned her gaze toward him without faltering.

「Even them were originally oppressed people. Because of that Fugil lent his strength to them, the weak to save them. But those weak people would always grow impudent and start exploiting those weaker than them unreasonably. Within such reality, all of you here were unable to save the world. That's a fact.」

「.....」

Lisha couldn't say anything to that and closed her mouth.

At the era where the tyranny of the old empire was going on, Lisha's father, Count Atismata cooperated with Lux and revolted, but in the end he died in battle.

Lux was also captured after Airi was taken hostage. Their revolution ended in failure.

That was the reality that would happen if Fugil didn't take action behind the scene.

That reality was falsified by Uroboros—and the old empire was destroyed.

It was the same with the competition for Avalon against the Lords. If Fugil didn't kill Listelka when she planned to rule tyrannically, it was very likely that everyone here would be executed.

「Originally there was no way for revolution by the weak to happen. The world cannot be changed without the interference from the strong. Fugil has been shouldering that task all alone until now. He has never run away even once and continues to fight even now.」

「Kuh.....!」

Lisha opened her mouth to argue back, but she hesitated.

If Fugil didn't find Lux and the revolution didn't happen—and if the imperial family wasn't destroyed to be the final push, by this time Lisha would have been reduced into an assassin of the old empire and died sooner or later.

There was implication in the Automata's words.

The world would be the same whether Fugil was there or not.

No, if anything there would be the weak people who wouldn't be saved without Fugil and Sacred Eclipse there.

「Do you, do all of you have the power for that? Do you have the resolve to face the weight of the world? If you defeat him even though you are unable to do that, then that'll be just for your self-satisfaction.」

「That's——」

「.....」

Not just Lisha, everyone standing there also couldn't make any voice.

The fate that they couldn't oppose.

Because they had been continuously toyed by that fate, they were unable to declare that they were absolutely in the right.

However——.

「——There is」

Lux's voice passed through inside the snowing forest.

Kiin.....! Light came from the site of Ruin that was a slight distance away and the three who entered inside were teleported there.

And then he confronted the Automata Arshalia with a straightforward gaze.

「Lux!? Are you safe!? What happened with Sacred Eclipse's revival system!? Were you able to obtain useful information to oppose Uroboros with!?!」

Lisha and the rest of Syvalles members turned toward Lux.

「Yes. Aeril has turned off the activation switch of Sacred Eclipse. As for Uroboros, I think we'll also manage somehow against it.」

Lux replied at the impatient Lisha while looking around to check everyone's safety.

And then last he turned his gaze toward the Automata Arshalia, the last remaining ally in Fugil's side.

「You talk just now, can I take it as a message from Fugil?」

Fugil would arrive here in several more hours.

Lux thought that perhaps he left the task of persuading them to retreat from here to the Automata before he arrived, but,

「No, this is my independent action as someone who has continued watching and recording his way of living until now. It's my opinion as the manager of the system you called Ruins.」

The Automata flatly denied Lux's question.

「I have been watching all this time. The Ruins were originally created in order to make humans prosperous, but the fact is that they are too much for the hands of human. Greta technology will not always bring people happiness. Some of the rulers—would use them to oppress other people for the sake of their own benefit. That is the history of mankind. The reality that cannot be overturned.」

「You—and Fugil has observed human for more than a thousand years. Is that the answer you arrived at?」

「Yes. That is the answer he arrived at as the hero who save the world.」

Arshalia nodded without delay. In respond Lux shook his head slightly.

「That's.....surely a lie. Fugil hasn't obtained any answer. That's why he is repeating this. Asking himself whether they are in the right or not. He is fighting because he has no way to get the answer for that question.」

「Then, are you saying that you have found the answer? The answer of how to save the people, what is the duty of a hero, and what do they have to do, can you answer them?」

「—Yes」

Lux showed a slightly anguished expression toward the Automata's question.

However, he didn't spend more time looking like that and quietly nodded back.

「.....I can't believe you. What is the answer then?」

「The answer.....I plan to tell him, Nii-san directly. I intend to face him with my own words and action. —That is my duty as someone who has received the guidance of that hero.」

「.....I, see.」

The Automata slightly looked down before slowly turning her back toward them.

「Farewell, elite Drag-Knights who has approached the truth until this far. If you still remain here a few hours later, then you will lose your life.」

Arshalia dispersed after a faint light enveloped her.

After that there was only silence remaining behind.

「—Fuu」

「.....Lux!」

Lisha and others rushed Lux the moment the atmosphere eased up after the threat before them left.

「We can do this can't we!? It's fine for us to fight isn't it!?!」

「Yes, I was able to obtain a definite proof after seeing Fugil's memory. I—have to defeat Nii-san. And then I need everyone's help to do that. Will everyone come with me?」

「Of course! I'm not going to remain here if that's not the case!」

Lisha clenched her fist and nodded. Krulcifer looked exasperated slightly away from her.

「Haa..... You're really quick to change your attitude, even though you were that dispirited just now.」

「That's just how important Lux's presence is for Princess Lisha, no—for us.」 Celis said

「Right.」 Philuffy also muttered in agreement with a faint smile.

「Then, the banquet ends here. The main members should rest with only the scouting team remaining alert. Don't use Drag-Ride for now!」

The members in the camp dispersed following Lisha's instruction.

They prepared several tents to avoid the snow and slept with bonfires surrounding them.

The Azure Division—mainly the Drake users under Magialca's command were monitoring the area until far distance away using their radar, so they would be able to detect Fugil's arrival.

Lux was sleeping alone inside a small tent. There he noticed how his thought was becoming clear.

Fugil's past.

He was the hero of the beginning who lived in an era of wars that was even more disgusting than the era of the old empire that Lux experienced as a little child. He fought for his dream of peace.

He found Lux, a seed of rebellion who was born from the old empire itself and guided him.

For Lux, Fugil's existence was salvation itself in his childhood.

At that time he had no ally anywhere.

No one would understand him.

He was unable to change the rotten authority with the lawful method.

Lux was despairing in the face of such reality. It was Fugil who showed him the path.

「.....」

『My wise younger brother. You can change this country if it's you. Let's burn the rotten root together with me. We will change the world.』

「A hero's mission.....」

He wondered what was in Fugil's mind at that time.

As the one who brought the equilibrium between the strong and the weak, was he considering Lux his pawn?

Or was he considering him as someone with the same will like himself?

Was he looking at Lux a new vessel of king?

.

Part 6

Fugil piloted his EX Wyvern to fly through the dawning sky.

He cut through the cloud that was dyed by the morning glow, heading toward the Ancient Forest without paying any heed of the falling snow.

The equilibrium between the strong and the weak. When it was judged that the balance was tipping completely to one side and couldn't be fixed with human hand, the hero would move.

There were lives with their fate had been fixed since they were born that they would only get exploited by the strong with vested interests.

The hero would move to take down the statesman in order to save those lives from their unfortunate fate, but it would be pointless if he just simply killed that single statesman.

Even if a single leader disappeared, he would only get replaced by a new leader. There wouldn't be any change to the system.

That was why it was necessary to raise a hero. He would select someone with excellent talent and nurtured them while giving them his assistance.

Other than finding good person, there were also many people who got buried for smoothening the change that happened.

In that case he would only use the fact that a rebellion occurred while using Endless to make the story coherent.

However, even if the person he found and nurtured managed to safely defeat the king, the authority would rot the heart of the country's rulers

sooner or later. Sometimes it would happen within three generations—and sometimes it could happen as early as within the same generation.

It was refrains of the sight he saw in Holy Arcadia Empire.

Many people were the same like those people from the clan of traitor who treated Arshalia's kindness with disdain. They would lose to their own greed and fell to become the same like the rulers who they loathed.

And so the equilibrium would crumble before long and become distorted.

In case the Sacred Eclipse possessed them directly, that immense power and the burden to their mind would make them fell even faster, but it was only a matter of time.

Singlen Shelbrit who he found at other country possessed enough qualification to become king in addition of his ideology and strength but—Lux possessed something different from htat.

He was dragged into political strife. He was made light of. He was hated by the people and they even abandoned his mother to die.

Even so he didn't choose to take cheap revenge.

「—Nii-san, do you think there is a way to change this country?」

It was the voice of someone who stood above others with all their emotions pushed aside.

At that time even Fugil couldn't completely read what lie inside the heart of Lux Arcadia who was still twelve years old.

That figure who still tried to bring about true peace after conquering the hatred that he was faced with.

Fugil had never seen anyone who could take such action after having someone dear taken away from them.

「There is. If it's you—it will be possible to change this country.」

—Hero.

The existence that Arshalia wished for. The existence that he aimed to become.

A descendant of the clan of traitor who was placed into the position as his little brother, Lux.

If it was this young man, then perhaps—Fugil entertained that hope.

That perhaps, Lux would be able to become a type of ruler who he had never seen before even after continuing to watch human history for thousands of years.

And then right now, he was heading toward the place where he would hear the answer of the question from seven years ago.

.

Part 7

On the other hand, at the campsite built in the temple site.

The countless bonfires were making crackling sound. Lux came out from his tent to look at the sky.

「—Haa」

It wasn't that cold thanks to the bonfires, but his breath still looked white.

The snowfall was lessening, but it was still slightly snowing.

In exchange the sparks from the bonfires were fluttering in the air. It was like the castle of the old empire at the day of the revolution when it was enveloped in flame.

「.....The mission, that a hero must accomplish huh.」

That small mumbling slipped out from Lux's lungs.

He learned about the past incident that happened more than a thousand years ago from Arshalia's AI that was hidden in the Garden.

It was the record of the two people who overcame many trials and fought the evil that lurked inside the people.

The way of life of the hero of the beginning Fugil and the goddess of salvation Arshalia.

The conclusion of the sad tale, where it wasn't over just by saving the people.

Even so, Fugil kept chasing the dream of peaceful world even now.

Using the Sacred Eclipse that became imperfect and Artifact Uroboros that could only be used by him, he chose those who could become hero and guided them for the sake of saving mankind.

However, there was still another truth hidden inside that story of the past.

Another fact that even Fugil didn't know—.

Because of that, Lux resolved himself once more to defeat Fugil.

(But—can I do it?)

Even winning against Fugil in battle was already a reckless gamble, but to do more as a prince was even more impossible—he couldn't help but thought that.

People who became ruler wouldn't necessarily act righteously—.

No, Lux knew that the number of righteous leader was in the minority instead.

He could find ruler who drowned in authority, prioritized their own self-preservation, and sacrificed their people anywhere he looked.

Even Queen Raffi was grieving from the pressure of her surrounding and turned to murder when Sacred Eclipse possessed her.

If by any chance—he could end this battle safely, would Lux be able to save other weak people like Raffi?

「——」

He didn't know.

It might be pointless even if he kept thinking about it, however—.

「Lu-chan. Aren't you cold, standing there?」

「Eh?」

He suddenly heard the voice of someone dear and got hugged tightly from behind.

Philuffy wearing a coat on top of her pilot suit had been standing right beside Lux without him noticing it.

「——Wait, why is Phi-chan here!?!」

「Shh. Everyone is resting, so be quiet.」

She said it with her usual expressionless face and my pace tone.

She had just gone a battle that fierce, and now she was also waiting for another battle that would even be more intense, and yet she was still unshakable as usual.

Lux lowered his voice just as he was told and asked her in whisper.

「Since when——you're here?」

「For some reason, I couldn't sleep, from before Lu-chan came here.」

「It's unusual that Phi-chan is saying something like that.」

She projected the image of always being composed, so he couldn't help but felt surprised, but——.

「I was worried, that Lu-chan might vanish to somewhere.」

Philuffy told him that with a small smile tugged on her lips.

It was like she could see the inside of Lux's heart.

「.....」

As someone who decided to fight Fugil, he didn't wish to drag everyone with him somewhere in his heart. It looked like this childhood friend of his had seen through that.

「You shouldn't worry about it alone you know? We are here, to share the burden.」

「—Yeah. Thank you.」

The two of them watched the snowy landscape close to each other for a while. Then Lux spoke out his mind.

He spoke about his worry whether he would be able to guide the new kingdom correctly if they managed to defeat Fugil.

He spoke about his wondering if there was any other way to save Queen Raffi somehow.





Lux wasn't expecting Philuffy to give him any definite answer.

After all he thought that those were the type of question that had no answer.

However——this lovable childhood friend gave him a very unexpected reply.

「I think, perhaps, it's impossible for Lu-chan.」

「Eh.....?」

Philuffy tilted her head with her usual blank look and said such thing.

Honestly, he was somewhat shocked.

He didn't think that she would tell him such thing so bluntly that his heart wasn't prepared.

「That's not what I mean.」

Philuffy seemed to guess Lux's state of mind from his expression and turned her gaze toward him once more.

「Lu-chan, from the start it's impossible to save everyone. Because Lu-chan, you aren't a god.」

「.....」

It felt like his chest was stabbed.

「But, Lu-chan saved me. And I think the princess managed to save Queen Raffi. Surely, it's fine like that. This world is——」

「.....You're right.」

Lux couldn't possibly save everyone by himself.

It would be arrogant of him to think that he could.

But, Fugil who had become a superhuman that far surpassed human—Fugil who had come to this point after directly facing the ugliness and beauty of human more than anyone, he was aiming for that height.

「I want to help Lu-chan. Even if I can't be any help, I want to stay beside you until the end and become your strength. That is my wish.」

「——Thank you, Phi-chan.」

As expected, her existence was a relieve for him.

Lux's heart intended to fight as an imperial prince of the old empire or perhaps as the Black Hero. But she returned his heart back into the heart of a single human without any title burdening it.

That was enough.

Because after this Lux would face the hero not as something exaggerated like a hero who would save the world, but merely as one little human.

「Yep. That's good, you look better now Lu-chan.」

「Say, Phi-chan」

After gazing on the soft smiling face of his childhood friend, Lux faced her directly once more.

If he was able to survive this battle.

If this battle ended without letting Philuffy die, he would have to take responsibility for her along with everyone else.

The memories of world revision in those three days of parade.

Although his memories were reset, but it was an undeniable fact that he had confessed his love to them.

「When this is over, I'll speak my feeling properly.」

「.....Yes.」

She replied with her usual smile that was warm like a sunny spot.

They decided to go back to the tent to sleep again, it was then——.

.

『——Everyone! Please wake up! The radar detected Abysses approaching! There isn't much time!』

.

Magialca's subordinate who was on the lookout. A female Drake user used the voice amplifier function to sound her warning.

Finally, the last moment arrived.

The fated opponent who ruled the history had returned to this place.

.

Part 8

「Swarm of Abyss? How!? Where in the world did they come from? Aeril!？」

The members of Syvalles, Seven Dragon Paladins, and Azure Division who were asleep slipped out from their tents and gathered into formation at the campsite.

First they listened to the detailed information of the Drake that served as lookout before taking position in this base to intercept the enemies.

Lux already gave everyone the method to overcome the Artifact Uroboros based on the information he obtained.

Because the central was Uroboros's other half, Fugil should come to take it back.

In addition he had also thought about countermeasure in case Fugil headed here alone ahead of the schedule, but—.

This Abyss raid that came out of nowhere made Lisha raised her voice in confusion.

The Abyss plant in this Ancient Forest—in the Avalon was under the control of Aeril through her connection with the central.

Furthermore at present—the Abyss's production wasn't turned on.

Even if Aeril's control authorization had been taken away, the Abyss production shouldn't be able to be carried out right away.

「I'm not sure but, Fugil stopped by at the Garden right? Perhaps he brought the Abysses from there to here? Perhaps he used the flute to control

them.」

Tillfur muttered with an unsure look. Sharis nodded beside her.

「That might be possible. In that case he shouldn't be able to control that many Abyss but.....」

「Yes. But there are troublesome signs. —There are twenty Diabolos. They are mid-sized Abyss that has self-destruction function. A powerful type among the Abysses.」

Diabolos was a flying Abyss with jet black body that possessed fangs and claws.

Lux and others had experienced fighting it several times.

「How nostalgic. The last time we fought them was at the Garden wasn't it? Though unlike that time, we have also become exceptionally stronger—」

Krulfifer replied like that to Noct's explanation.

Certainly, it wouldn't be that difficult to defeat that Abyss with the full power of the members here.

However, there was no way that such lukewarm attack was everything Fugil got in his sleeves.

In the first place, Fugil should be arriving here faster than those Diabolos, so it wouldn't be a mistake to consider that he got some trick up his sleeves.

「So he won't let things go as I planned.」

Abysses were deployed at this point of time.

That meant this was a diversionary tactic so they couldn't gang up on Fugil alone.

In other words—he considered Lux as his arch-enemy and prepared a plan of his own to face him.

「Lux. What are we going to do? At this rate this camp will be surrounded. It'll be different from our plan, but perhaps there isn't any other choice than meeting the enemy?」

「Yes, that's true.」

Lux nodded at Celis's advice.

The hero of the beginning—the one who guided and raised Lux to become a hero. A battle of wits against such person was going to start.

.

Part 9

On the other hand—.

Fugil who had linked up with the Automata Arshalia was focused on Lux.

At the center of Ancient Forest where the central was sleeping underground.

Far to the west from that location where Lux's group was taking position, Uroboros was at standby.

He didn't need to make Uroboros's main body moved directly. In this range it was possible to summon it to his location using its Sword Device.

Therefore Fugil equipped the Divine Drag-Ride that was produced by Uroboros's special armament—Infinity and formed a plan to first throw the formation of the enemy into disarray using his maneuverability.

Beside him, the Automata Arshalia displayed her doubt to her master Fugil.

「But, I can't understand why you will expressly bring those Abysses here. I don't think that Lux Arcadia and his allies deserve that much caution from you.」

From a glance, it might look like Fugil created Abysses using the Garden and brought them here to replace the manpower his side lost from the destruction of the Automatas, but the point of Arshalia's question was something else.

Originally Diabolos was a powerful Abyss, but they weren't that much of a threat against Lux and others in their full strength.

That meant that from the start they were nothing but pawns for the sake of diversion.

Was there any need to do cheap trick like that—the Automata was asking that.

But, Fugil equipped a certain Divine Drag-Ride and replied to that question with a fearless grin.

「—In the end he didn't destroy Avalon's central. Just from that I understand that he is seriously trying to defeat me.」

「.....? What do you mean, Fugil?」

The Automata showed a puzzled expression in contrast to her master who was making a convinced smile.

She was unable to understand Fugil's meaning even with her thought circuit that was installed with delicate programming.

「If he is simply wanting to get in my way, it will be enough to destroy the central completely. On the other hand, if he actually does that, he wouldn't be able to avoid his allies getting totally annihilated. That must be what he was thinking.」

If Lux and his allies combined their strength and destroyed the Central, Fugil would bring out the resource from other Ruins like Garden or Moon to repair the central. It would take years.

With the central destroyed, the world revision using Uroboros would also become sealed but—, in that case they would use up the majority of their strength that could be used to fight Fugil.

Considering Fugil's personality, he would only lay his hand on those who got on his way from accomplishing his mission. Lux judged that Fugil would slaughter them all for destroying the central.

But putting it the other way, if they remained behind without touching central, it would be hard for Fugil to launch a large scale attack directly using Uroboros.

「In that situation we can still take back Avalon undamaged, and you also won't need to expressly slaughter a lot of lives. you'll also be able to narrow your target for killing to Lux alone—he was limiting our action like that?」

Fugil nodded slightly at Arshalia's conclusion.

「You're mistaken with just one thing. I'm still not feeling that much threat from that spoiled child that I have to kill him no matter what.」

Singlen at his full strength showed a hidden strength that posed a threat to Fugil's life even if only temporarily.

Therefore Fugil had no choice but to kill him, but he didn't feel as much danger from Lux.

His evaluation toward Lux hadn't increased that much even now after Lux had defeated the completed form of Sacred Eclipse.

Nevertheless, Fugil formed a plan and wished for tactical battle of wits like this. For what reason?

Even Fugil himself didn't understand his reason for doing so.

But, right now he was perceiving Lux as a formidable enemy, more than anyone he had fought until now.

That was what the Automata Arshalia was feeling from Fugil.

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Part 10

「What's wrong Lux-kun? Twenty Diabolos are going to arrive here in several more minutes. If we're going to intercept them, we have to sortie now——」

Aeril raised her voice at the camp where the allied force of Lux and others were gathered.

Fugil still hadn't showed up within the detection range of their radars.

In contrast the Diabolos had dispersed to slowly encircle this temple site.

The twenty Diabolos would close the distance to the campsite until they were right in the top of them unless they dispersed their whole force of Divine Drag-Ride users to intercept the enemies.

「Right, Krulcifer-san. First please take care of the west where the enemy will first appear from.」

In respond to Aeril's demand for instruction, Lux ordered Krulcifer to sally out.

「Understood. I should fight without moving too far away from this camp, right?」

Their formation to intercept Uroboros wouldn't hold if their force was divided too much, so Lux expected Fafnir that possessed great sniping ability with its future prediction to finish up the enemies as quickly as possible. But,

「But, ain't the number too lacking to intercept the enemies? The enemies are encircling our surrounding ain't it? Can we stop them with just a single

Drag-Knight?」

「Yeah. That's why Greifer, I'll leave the east to you for the moment.」

The young man with blonde hair that was bristling up in part closed his mouth from Lux's instant answer to his question.

「.....Don't mention sniping, I don't even have any projectile weapon to attack from afar y'know?」

「But, your Cuelebre's invincibility will be useful in case the enemies self-destructed.」

「.....」

Though as expected, it would be difficult for him to take on multiple Diabolos simultaneously at close range.

「Don't complain, just go already. If you're scared then I'll go in your place.」

「Tsk, this damn prince really likes to work people hard.」

After the provocation from the youngest Seven Dragon Paladins, Mel Gizalut, the prideful Greifer had no choice but moving.

Lux was grateful in his heart seeing Mel's consideration to him by giving Greifer a push in the back skillfully.

However, if Lux's prediction was right, Diabolos wouldn't approach them any closer anyway.

(—Fugil. Your aim is to take back the central. In that case your aim is to draw us away from there.)

Fugil's tactic was to harass them by surrounding them with Diabolos so they would send their force to intercept the enemies. He would be able to move the battlefield with that.

At the same time it would also destroy the formation of Lux's force.

By the way, the one using radar to detect the enemies right now was Yoruka's Yato no Kami.

Fugil was still outside the radar's detection range, but if for example he used Bahamut's compression strengthening to do super acceleration, he would be able to close the distance of several km within a few seconds.

If their force was crushed one by one while they were scattered apart, they would be annihilated even without Uroboros in play.

Therefore they couldn't just simply head out to remove the Abysses.

It would be completely impossible for them to stop Fugil without all the members of the allied force here.

「—Aruji-sama. I detected a sign of Drag-Ride.」

「.....-!? Is it Fugil?」

「I don't know. There is a reaction of a Drag-Ride just barely within the radar's range at the west—that's the only information I have right now. The Drag-Ride has withdrawn.」

The radar only detected the Drag-Ride for a moment. Was it intentional on the enemy's part to make them focused on his presence?

In that case, there was enough possibility that the enemy was making them focused to the west while moving to attack from another direction.

Either way, the information advantage would be important.

If he couldn't predict Fugil's current location and his plan and fell behind him, the winning probability of Lux and others who were already in great disadvantage at the strength aspect would decrease until nearly zero.

「Yoruka, can you head to the west for me? I want you to continue tracking Fugil's movement until we defeat the Diabolos.」

「As you command.」

Yato no Kami that was a special equipment type Divine Drag-Ride could cover a wide range using its radar to detect the enemies.

And then, Yoruka herself was also someone who could adapt well to the change in the battle situation.

He could only entrust the difficult task of tracking Fugil to her.

Dan! Yoruka took off to the west using her Drag-Ride's four legs to leap.

Multiple Diabolos were prowling in the sky above, but Krulcifer held them back with her sniping. Yoruka slipped through using that opening.

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Part 11

「They took the bait, Fugil. It's just as you predicted. Kirihime Yoruka has started moving.」

The Automata Arshalia communicated with Fugil using Dragon Voice.

「Then let's circle around just as planned. You should also move like I told you before.」

Yato no Kami's radar possessed maximum detection range.

Naturally Fugil and Arshalia had accurately grasped that capability.

The blueprints of every Drag-Ride—the detail of their abilities had been drummed into their head.

Fugil's brain also possessed superhuman capability thanks to the Baptism that was applied to his whole body. He instantly detected that it was Yato no Kami who took off using the radar of the Divine Drag-Ride he was equipping.

In the first place, Yoruka was the only special equipment type Divine Drag-Ride user in Lux's camp right now.

He would be able to see through Lux's plan as long as he understood that Yoruka would be the one tracking after his location.

Lux made the judgment to prioritize tracking Fugil's location so they could be on their guard against him while also moving to remove the threat that were twenty Diabolos.

「Then—I'll dispel this Divine Drag-Ride Asp. Arshalia, give me Bahamut.」

「Roger. Activating special armament Infinity.」

Fugil dispelled his connection with the special equipment type Divine Drag Ride Asp he was wearing. In exchange he summoned and equipped Bahamut.

And then he fixed his aim at Lux alone and began taking action.

Asp that was created by Infinity and used by Fugil until now also possessed wide range radar just like Yato no Kami.

Therefore he could predict the movement of Yoruka who caught his current location and withdrew to the west.

Fugil wore Bahamut to head far away to the west before circling around to the south.

Arshalia who was controlling Artifact Uroboros was slowly advancing to the north.

In other words, Arshalia's Uroboros replaced Fugil to become diversion by pretending to be the Drag-Ride that was detected for an instant by Yoruka before this.

This action was more to distract Lux and others rather than for luring Yoruka away.

From the north Fugil went to the west before circling to the south. Arshalia was moving to make Lux and others thought that Fugil would attack from the north of their base, but Fugil was instead circling to the south to rush them from the opposite direction.

His aim was to finish Lux with one attack.

Fugil would destroy the core that united the enemy camp which consisted of people with different ideology and status. He was taking the best action to sever the opponent's unity.

Lux should be thinking that Fugil was circling to the north right now.

In that case—Yoruka's attention would also get directed to the north.

Uroboros that Arshalia was piloting was provided with all the abilities of land battle type, flying type, and special equipment type. So she could also grasp the movement of Yoruka who entered the range of her radar once more while sending Fugil the information of Yoruka's position.

And then now that Yoruka was sent out as scout, there was no way for Lux's side to detect the movement of the true Fugil.

Far at the south of the temple site where Lux's force took position—. From the distance that was outside the range of the radar of Noct's EX Drake, Fugil activated Bahamut's Divine Raiment.

「—Reload on Fire」

Crimson light surged out from the jet black armor and his time was super compressed.

The flow of time of the first five seconds was drastically slowed down until a fragment of the original, then the flow of time would be accelerated by multiple times at the later five seconds.

He would fly straight to north from here in full speed, to kill Lux who was standing still defenselessly.

The battle would be settled before anyone could even blink, literally.

「Was I overestimating you? Don't disappoint me here, my wise younger brother.」

But, this was Lux that he was facing. So perhaps he had been preparing some kind of countermeasure or trap.

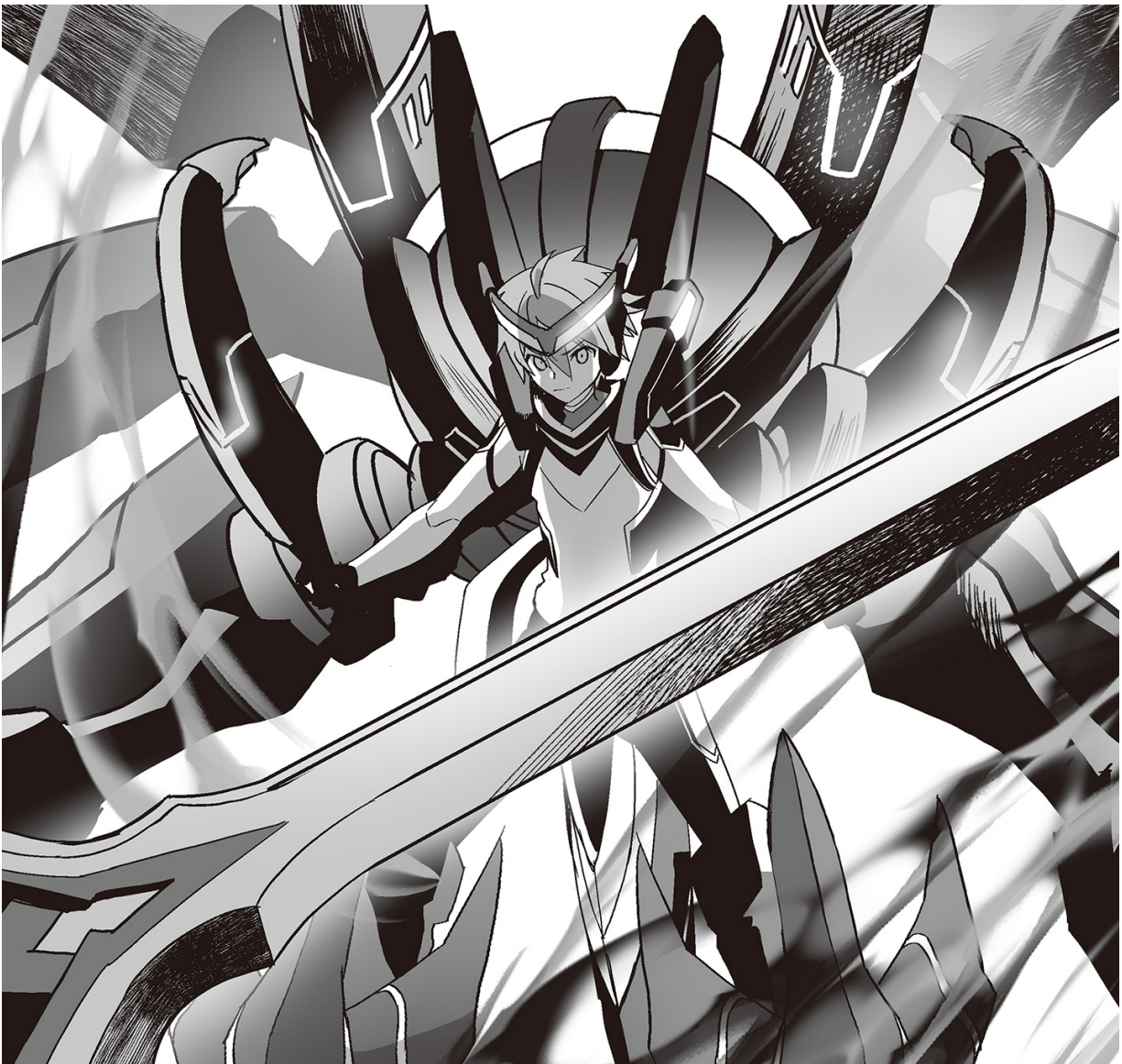
It would be anticlimax if he didn't do that much at least.

Fugil grinned fearlessly. A second later, he made Bahamut flew in full speed.

—*GO-!*

The air was split apart and a streak of black shadow pierced through the grey sky.

The speed was like a fired bullet. Within that speed, Fugil's superhuman eyes gazed fixedly at the camp far away like a bird of prey, fixing its aim—but,





(—!?)

A sense of discomfort wrapped around Fugil's whole body right after that.

The answer to that doubt that he couldn't describe was projected into his field of vision along with a phantom that looked as though he was looking at mirror.

The Drag-Knight from Arcadia imperial family with silver hair and grey eyes.

Lux Arcadia himself was flying right toward Fugil.

「—How can, this?」

Fugil slightly frowned. In that instant, Fugil also brandished his Chaos Brand.

Both of them were charging forward with super acceleration from Reload on Fire. The two streaks exchanged a sword slash.

.

—*BAGIiIII-!*

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A sound of destruction that split the eardrum burst in the air. Fugil was struck down and crashed on the forest right below him.

The match was decided in just a single instant of opening in Fugil's action from getting taken in surprise.

The tip of Chaos Brand that Lux swung had stabbed into Fugil's armored shoulder ahead of Fugil's great sword.

(—I see, so that's how)

Right after that, Fugil comprehended the reality while falling down.

The reason why Lux could see through Fugil's plan and intercepted him was just one. It was the hidden joker that Lux finally brought into play.

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Part 12

「Haa, haah.....!」

Lux whose five seconds of super acceleration from Reload on Fire had ended was released from the extreme tension and sweated from his whole body.

He grasped this first victory with a paper-thin difference.

He wished that he could immediately pursue Fugil who crashed below, but he had used intense concentration and mustered all his strength. The recoil made his body unable to move right now and he couldn't pursue.

He had to catch his breath in just several seconds.

While Fugil who was hit with a flash of counterattack was falling with his broken armor fragments scattered, Lux heard his little sister's voice.

『——Nii-san. Are you alright-!? As I thought, the attack just now——』

『Yes..... It's just, as I.....predicted. This is thanks to you Airi. I'm going to finish off Fugil now. Everyone, move just as we planned.....』

『Nii-san, be careful.....!』

He was communicating with Airi while breathing hard.

Fugil must have noticed too from the exchange just now.

That the piece Lux accidentally obtained and kept in secret——was used by Airi.

At the camp 2 kl north from here, there was Airi wearing the Divine Drag-Ride Jormungandr.

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Part 13

「I'm feeling complicated somehow. Even though Airi-chan has only just learned how to use Drag-Ride, she can only wear a Divine Drag-Ride now. How can we keep our face as her senior now?」

Airi was deploying the gigantic Drag-Ride Jormundgandr that was like a small fortress. Tillfur was standing guard around Airi while letting out a sigh.

Beside her, Noct was sending Tillfur a pointed stare.

「No. Please don't chatter pointlessly and focus. We don't know when the enemy will attack.」

「Yeah—but at least allow me to say this for now. Airi-chan, you did great.」

Sharis concluded the talk with that. Airi too smiled at her while still looking tense.

「—Thank you very much. This is thanks to everyone.」

「It's especially thanks to me though. But don't let your guard down. You are still not used with handling a Divine Drag-Ride. It doesn't matter even if your aptitude score rivaled Lux, using this thing will exhaust your stamina in no time at all.」

The reason why Lux was able to read Fugil's action that originally should be undetected and cut him down after countering his surprise attack was—.

The answer was this Jormungandr that Airi was wearing.

When the Automata Arhslia dispatched her nanomachine clone to Lux's camp, she also checked everyone who remained there.

Among them, she only found Yato no Kami that was piloted by Yoruka to be the only Drag-Ride with wide range radar.

And so she was able to intentionally step just barely within Yoruka's detection range and successfully drew her attention.

From there, Lux's force should be unable to detect the location of Fugil who circled around to the south of the temple site where they were encamped.

But, Airi who had already finished her contract and tuning with the Divine Drag-Ride succeeded in equipping the Jormungandr.

Of course, with Airi's piloting skill, she was still unable to properly move Jormungandr's characteristic seven arms.

However, she was just barely able to put up the barrier and used the radar.

And then, using the wide range radar of the special equipment type Divine Drag-Ride, she detected Fugil taking a large detour from west to south.

Lux's prediction from there was,

『Fugil's aim is most likely me. If he find a situation where he can attack me alone, he will come to finish me off without hesitation.』

He was the central personage who noticed Uroboros's loop and persuaded as well as leading everyone.

If he was taken down, the allied force's organizational capability would greatly decrease.

Fugil who had carried out a lot of historical revision in order to maintain the world's balance would undoubtedly prioritize targeting Lux.

And then, Lux predicted that once Fugil thought that he had gotten out of the radar's range, he would accelerate using Bahamut's compression strengthening and rushed to their base in one go. And his prediction had splendidly come true.

Launching a powerful assault that couldn't be detected.

It was Lux who accomplished that instead of Fugil.

(But, it's still not over.....!)

Thanks to Airi and Magialca—they obtained the advantage with a plan that used a hand that even Fugil didn't know they had. But putting it the other way around, it also meant they suddenly had used up their greatest trump card.

From here on they could only face Fugil with capabilities that he was already aware of.

If Lux let go of this chance of a lifetime, it would make it extremely difficult to defeat Fugil.

「Now, is the only chance.....!」

Lux regained his breath and flew to the forest below where Fugil's Bahamut was falling.

Fugil's armor was already half-destroyed, and originally just the impact alone would have dealt a great damage to the pilot, but Fugil was a superhuman who had Baptism performed on his whole body.

His body's endurance, physical ability, thinking capacity, they all should be far better than the average Abyss.

「—Reload on Fire」

Lux raised his vigilance to the maximum and activated the Divine Raiment of strengthening compression.

The target was Lux's time.

Lux also saw red light surged from below him. It seemed Fugil also used Reload on Fire in reaction to Lux.

But, if he brought the fight into another exchange of slash in super accelerated speed, Lux would be in advantage due to the better condition of his Drag-Ride.

Even in the worst case that Uroboros's main body was summoned here, its size that was too big would make it took time until it was completely teleported and set up here.

It would be the same even with Over Limit that summoned additional armor.

Previously—in the battle at the abandoned capital Guernica, Lux had memorized the deployment time of Uroboros. He predicted that this time it would also take that much time.

Therefore he chose the best option to seal that option from Fugil.

Because Arshalia who was piloting Uroboros's main body was heading to the north, she would be unable to attack here directly.

In other words, this would be completely a one on one.

「One, two , three.....!」

Lux counted the time until the acceleration while hypothesizing every possibility of counterattack.

He would finish this battle before Fugil could exert his full strength.

That should be the best plan to take.

「Four.....!」

Lux started moving using the super acceleration of time.

The vision wasn't good because of the trees and snow, but Fugil should be in the same situation.

The situation was even for both sides, then Lux should be able to obtain the advantage from the difference in their Drag-Ride's damage.

Lux was convinced of his advantage and dived down with his great sword at the ready.

The trees were in the way so it was difficult to swing his great sword, but he transmitted energy into the sword and descended while cutting apart the trees along.

But, at the next instant.

Countless machine fragments attacked Lux together with a dazzling light.

(—Howling Roar? No, it's Break Purge!)

Fugil's counterattack was completely outside his expectation that Lux was hesitating in the middle of his accelerated time.

He couldn't avoid all the fragments because he was holding his blade vertically while he himself was swooping down in full speed.

「Uh, gu!」

He deflected the majority with his barrier, but his balance crumbled when large fragments hit his armor.

(But, what is he planning? Certainly he might be able to avoid my attack with this, but if he take off his Bahamut—)

If Fugil became unarmored, he wouldn't be a match for Lux who had a Drag-Ride equipped.

Just what could he be thinking?

The instant Lux pondered that, the figure of Fugil taking a stance with his Sword Device hazily came into his view in the middle of snow.

「——!」

(Don't tell me, he is planning to intercept me with only his Sword Device!?)

Rather than getting into a sword fight with a half-destroyed Bahamut, this way of fighting might still be better.

(However.....no, it's forbidden to hesitate! I'll get killed if I hesitate!)

Lux instantly resolved himself and charged with Chaos Brand's tip aiming at Fugil's right foot.

——But,

「Your endgame is too rushed, my wise younger brother. ——You're too hasty to win.」

「.....-!?!」

No.

Fugil was wearing an armor.

But, he had no armor except of the half that contained the Force Core that was the energy source. It didn't even have the mechanism to generate barrier.

And yet, that composition made it possible to move the Drag-Ride at the minimum.

Lux's Chaos Brand thrust from above to below, but Fugil dodged with a half rotation. He unleashed a horizontal swept at Lux's back wings that was empowered by his body's twist.

「Gu-ah.....!」

That precise and yet mighty blow stopped the movement of Lux's Bahamut this time.

He was sent flying and crashed through the trees or getting bounced away before getting buried into the snow.

He hurriedly try to recover his posture, but Fugil had flown toward him before he could fix his balance.

「Break Purge....., you removed only the broken parts that became unusable and the barrier generator——」

How could Fugil move perfectly using half-destroyed Bahamut?

The answer was the Break Purge that he executed before this.

Lux thought that Fugil was buying time to switch into another Drag-Ride.

Or perhaps—he was going to challenge Lux with his flesh and blood body, so Lux readied himself to steel his resolve to kill Fugil.

However, the reality was different.

(Un-believable.....! I completely misread him!)

Lux gritted his teeth while his breath was taken away from the impact on his back.

Fugil was hit by a surprise attack, his Drag-Ride was seriously damaged, and his body was also wounded. In that condition he chose to perform Break Purge, leaving behind only the usable parts.

He discarded the majority of his barrier and protective armor, lightening his weight and entering the mode where the remaining energy could be focused to the remaining parts.

In other words, he used the same technique like Celis's kamikaze attack form.

Of course, doing such thing increased the risk and the damage from the recoil by remarkable amount compared to wearing Drag-Ride normally, but he never thought that Fugil would master the technique that Celis personally invented.

A Drag-Knight wouldn't be able to do Break Purge to enter the kamikaze attack form just from an idea on the spot.

To ascertain whether they would be able to fight in that form or not—, they would need to do a great amount of test.

But, Fugil chose that action without any hesitation—he was obviously used of doing that.

Lux had misread him in that aspect.

「Your surprise attack just now was magnificent, my wise younger brother.」

An indifferent voice reached Lux's ears.

His sight was still bad and he couldn't figure out Fugil's location from where he was standing.

However, he understood the direction of his enemy. He took a defensive stance by relying on his instinct.

The latter five seconds of his Reload on Fire had passed. The instant the effect of the accelerated time had run out, a slash from Fugil descended on Lux's great sword.

「Tsu.....?」

The wide range radar of Jormungandr—it seems there was someone who was using it well. I don't think it's possible for Alma Atismata to do such thing yet. In that case is it Airi? It was a good judgment for you to hide it until now. You made a wonderful decision to suddenly play that hidden trump card. Taking the initiative is the most important thing in battle.]

「Uu.....!」

Their swords were locked with each other, but the power of Fugil's Bahamut was overwhelming Lux.

Due to the kamikaze attack from after the Break Purge, the Drag-Ride's armaments became limited. The amount of energy that could be poured into the remaining moving parts was increasing from before.

And then—inside this forest with the trees standing close to each other, Lux's armor that was still in its complete state sealed his movement instead. On the other hand Fugil's lightened Bahamut obtained the advantage.

Even if Fugil wasn't a superhuman, this situation around him right now would still be disadvantageous for him. The reality of that made Lux shudder.

(Un, believable.....)

Fugil responded to his surprise attack with another surprise attack. He grasped the situation several seconds after receiving a serious damage, saw through Lux's next action, and prepared a counterattack of his own.

Furthermore, he held Lux back with Break Purge while entering kamikaze attack form at the same time to control Bahamut that had its power output lowered. Furthermore he decreased the amount of his armor and moved the battle to a cramped place with a lot of trees that was advantageous for him.

(What if I was the one who got hit with that surprise attack? Would I be able to do something like this after that?)

That thought crossed his mind. He understood that it was pointless to think of that.

But, for the first time Lux felt uneasy thinking that his prediction might be greatly mistaken.

He thought that even if he couldn't win against Fugil in a head-on confrontation, he would be able to close the gap in their ability depending

on the method. But perhaps such thinking was actually completely mistaken?

「You have blundered. Then what should you have done then? I would get away if you didn't quickly pursue me at that time. You also didn't have the time to use Over Limit. The action you took should be right. Are you thinking like that?」

「.....Tsu!?!」

Fugil whispered in front of him as though he had seen through Lux's mind.

He mustn't get led astray by his voice.

If he lost focus, his control of his Drag-Ride would grow sluggish and created a fatal opening.

Even so, Fugil's words still became a blade that attacked him.

Lux's mind that was taken by surprise was assaulted by Fugil's remarks.

「I'll tell you starting from the conclusion. Your decision to fight me itself is a mistake. I'll allow you to put down your sword and retreat even now. I'll also return your comrades unharmed. This will be my last warning to you.」

「——Who do you think you're talking to!」

From the sword locking contest where he was slightly pushed back, Lux took action to reverse the situation.

He gathered energy into one point in his head piece and unleashed that energy in spiraling shape.

Howling Roar.

The Howling Roar that was launched while doing other action lacked the power to deal the damage it was meant to do, but it was different in this situation.

Because Fugil had taken off the majority of his armor by the Break Purge, he had lost his barrier generator.

Therefore, even the weakened Howling Roar that Lux unleashed right now could be expected to deal enough damage.

Especially to his half destroyed Drag-Ride, while Fugil himself might be alright with his superhuman body, this attack would be enough to break the damaged Drag-Ride.

Lux's eyes that saw through the opponent's weakness weren't wrong.

However, Fugil reacted instantly even toward this.

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—*Zagun!*

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「Gah.....!」

Fugil reversed the wrist of his armored arm and struck Lux's head armor with a single upward thrust.

The attack that was unleashed with Quick Draw sharply took the initiative and stopped the Howling Roar that Lux unleashed from forming.

「—Howling Roar」

Instead it was Fugil who showered the stunned Lux with Howling Roar.

Lux was blown away along with the armor he was wearing. His recovery was slow because of the damage on his back wings.

There, Fugil swooped down on him—.

(Not good..... That stance is.....!)

Lux read Fugil's aim even while getting blown away.

Fugil's aim in making Lux's stance crumbling was—to execute the Drag-Ride's secret piloting technique, End Action.

If he was showered with consecutive attacks that wouldn't end just like that name suggested, his defeat would be set in stone.

Right now Lux was already running out of method to escape that fate.

「To choose the wrong option when the choices are plain and simple is the proof of incompetence as a ruler, my wise younger brother.」

The hero of the beginning laughed Lux's choice that rejected his compassion.

In that moment where the future that was Lux's defeat would become reality in one more second, countless stakes and chains got in the way of Fugil's path.

DO-DO-DO-DO-!

The purple chains that stabbed the ground were the special armament Pile Anchor.

That meant Typhon piloted by Philuffy was rushing here to support Lux.

「I won't, let you.」

After he heard Philuffy's voice, the anchors that were buried into the ground were rolled back.

She prevented Fugil from finishing off Lux and stood on his way.

「So you came to throw away your life that was saved.」

But Fugil didn't look perturbed at all and brandished his blade. He turned around still in that posture and swept aside the lance that was thrusting at his back.

「We don't have any intention of throwing away anyone. We are only putting our life on the line in order to move forward.」

Celis who moved behind Fugil using Divine Gate's instant teleportation let out a thrust with her Lance.

The two's reinforcement made it in time to get Lux out from his predicament.

—Or rather than saying they made it in time, Philuffy and Celis had immediately followed Lux right after he decided to intercept Fugil.

Because Krulcifer and Yoruka had already left the base, these two were assigned with the duty to assist Lux.

It could be said that this was also within Lux's calculation.

Because if he managed to perform the surprise attack on Fugil and held him back, he would be able to fight him along with his powerful allies after some time passed.

He also still hadn't given Fugil any leeway to summon Uroboros.

The battle situation was now turning from overwhelming predicament into overwhelming advantage for their side.

And yet, Fugil's expression was still sporting that smile of composure.

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Part 14

—Meanwhile, at the west side of the camp where Lux's force was encamped.

A battle against Uroboros that Automata Arshalia was controlling and Diabolos that were approaching the base was unfolding.

「Even though, this isn't the time to bother with these small fries—」

Krulcifer brushed up her blue hair impatiently while intercepting the enemies with Fafnir's sniping.

The Diabolos had been strengthened with Elixir injection.

It was slightly disadvantageous for Krulcifer in her current state where she was preserving her Full Connect, but she couldn't possibly play her trump card here.

If she didn't use it to face Fugil or at least to stop Arshalia's movement, she would just play into the enemy's hand that wished to exhaust the battle strength of their side.

「GISHAAAAA-.....!」

「Tsu.....! Another one.....」

However, when the third Diabolos entered her sight, she became unable to keep saying that. At this rate, Krulcifer's defensive line would be breached. If that happened, the formation of the allied force near the camp would be thrown into disarray.

She mustn't let the enemies approached the location of Airi and Aeryl who were taking position to protect the central.

However, when facing multiple powerful enemies like this, even the future prediction of Wise Blood would become inaccurate.

While she was pondering that, one of the three Diabolos in front of her stopped moving.

Its chest bloated up until several times its original size and red cracks were forming up.

「—No good!」

This Abyss's characteristic was to self-destruct when it was lethally wounded and destroyed its surrounding in a wide range.

Furthermore the Diabolos here had been strengthened by Elixir, so the explosion's power was also exceptional.

Krulcifer hurriedly acted to shoot it down before it could explode, but it caused an opening to be created. The two remaining Diabolos didn't miss that chance.

「Damn—!」

Black claws that were sharp like sword attacked Krulcifer from behind.

She managed to block it with Auto Shield, but it stopped her movement for a moment. Bright flash surged from the Diabolos that was in self-destruct mode in that opening.

「Tsu.....!?!」

Krulcifer's body stiffened along with the thunderous sound and explosive blast.

She didn't even need to use the future prediction to realize that she would be unable to block the explosion and got heavily wounded. She lamented that fact but—.

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「Haa, what are you doing. Aren't you a bit to slack recently in the emotional aspect?」

「Perhaps her head is filled with the matter of the young man——Mahaprana!」

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Krulcifer caught the voice of Mel and Soffice while her eyes were closed. Then the situation was overturned.

The shockwave and heat wave that were released by the self-destruction of the strengthened Diabolos only hit the Diabolos diagonally behind. It was instantly burned to ash.

The explosive energy was directed to a single point by the trajectory control of Vritra's Divine Raiment.

Mahaprana could make use of the enemy's attack the stronger it was. It could be said as the most suitable ability for this situation.

「——You two, why are you here?」

「You are asking that? We simply didn't believe that you will be able to manage somehow here by yourself. ——Dual Shift」

Mel used Ddraig Gwiber's Divine Raiment——the temperature control to lower the Diabolos's temperature to become extremely low, freezing its surface body.

She smashed it with her Halberd the moment it froze and its movement turned dull.

The falling snow would melt when touching the Abyss's skin due to their high temperature, causing their skin to be slightly wet. That was why it was possible to freeze them instantly.

The two of them were protecting the camp, but after they received contact from Airi that Lux had determined Fugil's position and moved to intercept

him, these two came to back up Krulcifer.

「Actually it feels like it will be more exciting to face Fugil directly. But I also won't be able to sleep soundly if I let you my rival die, so I came here to help.」

「That's what you said Mel, but you're actually quite an attentive and caring girl aren't you?」

Soffice's retort made Mel reddened. Krulcifer smiled wryly seeing her face.

Greifer was also someone attentive and caring despite his appearance. So perhaps his trait had infected Mel before she realized it?

In the past she was at the opposing side against these two girls, but now they were getting along like this. This too was also thanks to Lux.

She could feel Lux's presence at her side even though he was fighting somewhere else right now.

It made her happy. That was why she couldn't lose here.

After all the future that Krulcifer wished for could only come if they survived this battle without losing anyone.

「Then——indeed. I guess I should let the other girls to back up Lux for now.」

Krulcifer used her Dragon Voice and sent a call to Airi who was equipping Jormungandr.

『I'm glad you are safe Krulcifer-san. Yoruka-san is dealing with the remaining Diabolos while the rest, around ten of them are slowly heading toward the camp here. As for Nii-san—he is in the middle of fighting Fugil together with Celis-senpai and Philuffy-san.』

『——I see.』

『Also, please quickly return here when you can. If not.....』

『Yes, I've already sensed it. But, it'll be better for us to join up after all of the Diabolos has been taken care of. Either way we need someone to stop them on their track right?』

If Lux and Fugil were currently engaged against each other, then she had to face the other formidable enemy in his place.

Krulcifer and others were already starting to hear its footsteps from their location.

『——Warning』

The Automata Arshalia broadcasted her voice using the Drag-Ride's voice amplifier.

That gigantic Drag-Ride that was hiding using camouflage suddenly appeared before their eyes.

「——That's!」

「Artifact Uroboros.....! It's already this close-」

This Divine Drag-Ride's approach was too fast despite its enormous size. It dumbfounded Mel and Soffice.

If it kept its current pace, it would arrive at their base in the east in less than several minutes.

Even though they were also pressed to deal with the remaining ten-odd strengthened Diabolos——.

『It will be against Fugil's wish to erase all of you here. But, if you're going to keep getting on our way no matter what, I will be forced to do so. I will hold back for three times, but it won't be my responsibility if you die with just that. Prepare yourself.』

「How very kind. Though the way it's looking down on us like that——」

Mel sweated nervously even while grinning fearlessly after hearing that warning.

For the two Seven Dragon Paladins here, they had faced this threat before with six of them but still got defeated. And now they would have to face it with less battle strength than before.

Of course, their objective was only to hold it back until their base camp finished its attack preparation. But this opponent wouldn't make even such thing easy for them.

There was a long-distance sniping cannon that equaled Sevens Heads, protruding from its stomach. It was also equipped with a giant sword that looked more like a steel tower. If they got hit directly by those weapons even once, it would be suspect whether they could survive or not even using barrier that was fueled with all their energy.

「You can run away if you're scared. No one will scold you.」

Krulcifer made a light talk in front of the overwhelming threat. Mel snapped at it.

「Nice idea, how about we bet who will be the first to run away?」

「The first person to run away will have to treat everyone.」

Soffice said jokingly. Then the three of them readied their weapons.

Right after that, the giant Divine Drag-Ride that was like a fortress flew forward. Its movement shook the trees of the Ancient Forest.

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Part 15

「GISHAAAAAAA-.....!」

『——Yoruka-san! Are you safe!? You are being surrounded by three Diabolos——』

『There is only two. I have defeated one just now.』

『You're still the same..... It's a bit relieving though.』

Airi said with a sigh that was a mix of exasperation and admiration.

Even in such overwhelmingly disadvantageous situation, this girl's strength that towered above the rest was still the same.

「More importantly, is Aruji-sama alright? This is a disgrace for me as a servant. To waste time for taking care of opponent of this level and be unable to immediately rush to my master's side——」

「You don't need to worry. Nii-san also has strong allies accompanying him right now.」

Yoruka was able to pilot Yato no Kami perfectly after resting and recovering for a few hours. She was reliable as usual.

She didn't have any worry at all even when being surrounded by multiple strengthened Diabolos.

Because they were biological creature, she could read their breathing and took advantage at the opening of their awareness and used Instant Strike.

Krulcifer's group was stopping the invasion of Uroboros from the north, while Yoruka was suppressing the Diabolos that were approaching from the

west.

Lux and Fugil were in the middle of fighting at the south—that was the battle situation at present.

Before long some Diabolos would also arrive at the camp where Airi and others were taking position, so the crucial moment still hadn't arrived but—.

『.....Err, Krulcifer-san's group has defeated three, and Yoruka-san just defeated one—there should be twenty Diabolos—there is still one that is unaccounted. Or is it just my imagination?』

Airi suddenly spoke her doubt that her calculation might be mistaken. Her doubt came from a simple anxiety, so it shouldn't be something that would cause anything major. But,

『—That, is indeed strange.』

Although it was a powerful Abyss that was in question here, in the end it was just a single Abyss.

Airi thought that it would be beneath the notice of someone as skilled as Yoruka, but she clung at Yoruka's comment.

『Strange.....really? Certainly you can call this strange but—』

Even after listening to Yoruka, Airi still couldn't find any point of focusing on just a single Abyss.

When speaking about the seriousness of the threats, Fugil or Arshalia would be far more dangerous.

『Perhaps, the enemy is hiding something. If the aim of the enemy's tactician was to lure me out alone like this—』

『.....tsu!?!』

Airi came to a sudden realization after listening to Yoruka's voice that was accompanied by the whirring sound of the Drag-Ride.

Yoruka who possessed wide range radar through her special equipment type Divine Drag-Ride was forced to move west in order to locate Fugil—she was baited to move there.

Airi thought that Celis and Philuffy were the most suitable people to give Lux back up against Fugil because of their mobility, but to be honest she wished that it could be Yoruka who assisted Lux because of her ability to use Spell Code.

Thinking very carefully, Lux indeed succeeded in predicting Fugil's aim and intercepted him but—the situation that was created was also advantageous for the enemy cap.

『Don't tell me, no..... It's nothing. Yoruka-san, please fight carefully. I will contact you again if something happen.』

『Understood miss commander.』

Airi finished the light talk and cut off the contact with Yoruka.

And then she started wracking her brain about the meaning of the words that Yoruka said.

「What's the matter Airi?」

「No——」

It was hard to believe that the whole situation right now was going according to Fugil's plan.

However, if she considered at minimum that Fugil had managed to obtain an advantage by making Yoruka facing Diabolos instead of confronting him directly—then as she thought, Fugil's ability to predict ahead couldn't be underestimated.

In a sense he was surpassing Lux who got ahead by using the trump card that was Airi who could use Jormungandr.

After thinking to that point, she also came to suspect the Diabolos that vanished to who-know-where.

She must not underestimate the advice from Yoruka and just thought of it as her imagination.

Airi felt that she had to use her brain and made herself useful, for Lux's share too.

「More importantly, Lisha-sama. Please get to your position. Three strengthened Diabolos are heading our way. They will arrive soon!」

「Yeah, leave it to me. Let's go! You all!」

「Yes, Ane-ue!」

The Drag-Knights remaining in the temple site—at the base where the central was sleeping underground, drove their respective Drag-Ride forward.

Alma of Azure Division served as Airi's guard just like the Triad. Lisha, Greifer, and Rosa were to intercept the Diabolos.

After they left there was only Aeryl remaining here, but Zahhak was still half-broken. Her stamina was also exhausted from connecting with the central, so she didn't go out—or rather, she couldn't.

What was left was giving her all to do what she could like putting up barrier or collecting the wounded Drag-Knight.

Airi and others had to build as much advantage as possible before Fugil could reach his destination, the central—.

Considering that, how much groundwork could they finish in order to put the victory conditions in place?

That would become the greatest key for grasping the victory.

「Everyone—please stay safe.」

Airi saw off Lisha and the other two who went to intercept the Diabolos while muttering.

The Divine Drag-Ride Jormungandr was consuming her stamina greatly just by wearing it, but she mustn't whine here.

Compared to the suffering of being someone who could only be protected until now, this situation where she was standing in the thick of it felt pleasant instead for her.

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Part 16

「Haaaaa-.....!」

Inside a forest two kl south from the temple site where the central was sleeping.

Celis lunged with her Lightning Lance along with a shout that sounded like a roar.

The deadly thrust that was clad in electricity possessed the power to blow away the trees crowding the area.

And even if it was blocked, the electricity could even bring death to Fugil's body after it penetrated his thinned armor after the Break Purge.

However, Celis showed no hesitation at all.

Although he wasn't a normal human anymore—he was still made from flesh and blood. Celis had resolved herself to kill him and let out a deadly attack—but,

「—Reload on Fire」

Fugil activated Bahamut's Divine Raiment an instant faster. His target was Celis and Lindwurm.

「Wha-.....!?!」

Instantly Celis's movement—her flow of time was drastically reduced to a fragment of the original.

Due to the characteristic of Reload on Fire's compression strengthening, her movement turned dull and her attack was sealed.

No matter how powerful and unblockable the attack was, there would be no problem as long as it didn't hit.

Then next in this situation Fugil was aiming to perform the battle technique that Lux invented, Violent Strike.

Celis would be practically defenseless during the remaining four seconds of the time compression. If she was attacked right now, the accumulated impact would burst at the later five seconds.

「Phi-chan!」

Lux was still unable to move properly. He called out to Philuffy to stop Fugil.

In respond Philuffy immediately shot her Pile Anchor from the middle range to attack from the side at Fugil who was moving to slash Celis.

「—Fu」

But, Fugil smiled and showed a super reaction speed as though he had anticipated it.

The tip of a pile that moved quickly like bullet was deflected with his great sword. The chain's trajectory was changed and it entwined around Celis's Lindwurm.

「Tsu.....!」

Right after that, the chain of Pile Anchor that twined around the electricity spear became a conductor that sent the lightning attack to Philuffy's Typhon, sealing her movement.

Fugil then twisted his body to dodge the remaining anchors with the smallest movement.

That whole exchange only took three seconds.

Fugil landed a slash with his Chaos Brand on Celis's shoulder using the remaining two seconds.

「U-aah.....!」

The instant the later five seconds of the strengthening compression of time arrived, Celis got blown backward while Philuffy was stopped from moving due to the paralysis from the electric attack.

「.....Im-possible!」

Because Bahamut had entered kamikaze attack form due to the Break Purge, the Drag-Ride had certainly turned lighter and its offensive power also increased.

On the other hand—its defense had thinned and it couldn't even produce a barrier. But Fugil was easily dealing with Celis and Philuffy who were in full strength despite the high risk to himself.

He only used Reload on Fire to dodge the Lightning Lance that was clad in electricity, wrapped a Pile Anchor from Typhon around the lance, causing a friendly fire, sealing the two's movement.

Lux thought that even for Fugil, it would be next to impossible for him to break through this situation while he was being unable to use Uroboros directly.

But, using instantaneous creativity that even Lux couldn't think up on the fly, Fugil magnificently overcame his predicament and turned into counterattack.

「How, can you possibly.....? You're——」

「I have previous experiences of facing teamwork at that level many times before. I met a painful experience when I was at the receiving end of such attack for the first time. Though I can't even remember how many hundreds of years ago it happened——」

Fugil picked up the words that Lux muttered unconsciously and smiled derisively.

Previous experiences.

Fugil had repeated history many times to maintain the equilibrium of the world. He had fought people piloting Divine Drag-Rides many times through it all.

No—he had even experienced every kind of disadvantageous situations throughout the strifes in the era of Holy Arcadia Empire.

He almost died many times. Each time he would overcome the borderline between life and death. The power of experience he obtained from all those was unmatched.

Lux shuddered inside his heart against this strength.

Even he himself had amassed experiences of many battles as the Weakest Undefeated to learn how to read the pattern of enemy's attack.

But Fugil was in the possession of experiences that were dozens of times greater than Lux.

「Lux! You mustn't falter! His target is you!」

It was just for several moments, but Lux's movement had stopped from astonishment. Celis who was blown away raised her voice to warn him.

Lux gasped and came back to his senses. But Fugil was already moving at that time.

「—Did I ever say something like that? Stop acting under the wrong impression if you don't want to mistake your path again.」

「Tsu.....!」

Fugil's target wasn't Lux, but Celis who was unbalanced after Lindwurm's shoulder was slashed.

The slash that was unleashed while flying at low altitude flashed to stab her shoulder armor. It was then,

「Kuuh!」

Celis immediately twisted her body and avoided direct hit to the Force Core that was a Drag-Ride's vital part.

However, the chest part where the barrier was thin got cut in exchange. Celis opened her eyes wide due to the impact that penetrated through her armor.

「Uaaaaah.....!?!」

「Celis-senpai!」

She was just barely hanging on so that her armor wouldn't be dispelled, but she wouldn't be able to move properly for a while now.

It could be said that at least they avoided having Lindwurm getting taken down and couldn't be used anymore in this battle, but the compensation for that was great.

However, Fugil's aim in attacking Celis first was something that Lux painfully understood.

The lightning that Lindwurm unleashed dealt electric attack that couldn't be blocked from the tip of its lance.

For the current Fugil whose defense had been rapidly decreased due to the Break Purge, he would instantly lose just from getting hit by the lightning attack.

That was why he carefully brought Celis down first.

「Astonishing. You managed to avoid direct hit to your Force Core in this situation, but, it's still foolish. That man who you believe in has no value for you to risk your life until that far. The weak who provoke other people

to challenge an impossible battle can't be called a hero. In other words——」

Fugil brandished his Chaos Brand once more and swung down toward Celis.

Philuffy was still paralyzed by the electricity, so she couldn't move.

In order to block the finishing blow to Celis, Lux ignored the pain in his body and drove Bahamut forward.

「STOP! FUGILLLLL!」

He charged in a straight line through the shortest and fastest route. Even so he most likely wouldn't make it in time.

However, he judged that Celis's life might be spared if by some chance Fugil changed his attack target to Lux.

But, Lux could clearly picture it.

The future that would occur in one or two more seconds.

The Bahamut that Fugil equipped would swing down the great sword without hesitation, causing fresh blood to gush like fountain.

Lindwurm's armor would break into pieces. Blood would spurt out from the severed arm. Such scene flashed inside Lux's head.

The instant Lux thought that, his consciousness was dyed white.

He wondered whether it was sadness, anger, or despair that was filling him now.

Lux's thinking speed that was reinforced by Baptism was lengthened until the extreme.

「HAAAAAAAAA.....!」

The distance was too far for him to block the attack aiming at Celis.

A preparation would be needed to gather the energy for launching Howling Roar.

He wouldn't make it in time even by throwing a dagger. Philuffy and Celis also couldn't move.

However, there was something that he could do.

Lux grasped his own situation and reeled the Pile Anchor under his feet toward him using Linker Pulse.

The next instant, Fugil's arm that was raised to finish off Celis using Chaos Brand was stabbed by the tip of Lyndwurm's lance.

「—What?」

Fugil who had never showed a shaken expression until now slightly raised his eyebrow.

Due to the Break Purge, he had lost his barrier generation device and his armor was removed until the very minimum. So his flesh arm could be stabbed just by lightly pointing the lance tip to him.

Right after that, the great sword that Fugil swung down was averted from Celis's body, cleaving the layer of snow piling up on the ground.

「—I see」

Fugil finally noticed the true identity of the special technique that Lux used after seeing the result.

Before this Fugil used the Pile Anchor that Typhon fired to entwine around Lindwurm's Lightning Lance, causing friendly fire.

He grasped that Philuffy was paralyzed by the electricity and naturally wouldn't be able to move right away.

But when Lux reeled the Pile Anchor, he could also control the lance that was entwined by the wire even if only slightly.

It was the tactic of making use of other Drag-Knight's weapon just like Fugil showed him.

Lux went further to improvise using the current situation that was born from Fugil's tactic so he could counterattack at Fugil himself.

This was an event that was established because the armor of Fugil's Bahamut had been extremely reduced through Break Purge.

If his Bahamut was still in its undamaged form, something like a lance that was only lightly moved without even any energy empowering the blade would only get repelled by the barrier easily.

However Lux used that opening and chose the best plan that could be carried out due to the change in situation.

He made use of Fugil's action that he had only grasped just now and broke down the despairing situation of this battle.

「——Good move.」

Once more Fugil brandished Chaos Brand that missed its attack and smiled.

「But, in the end you are simply buying a little time. The result for all of you——haven't changed.」

Fugil's other hand touched the Sword Device on his waist. It was then Celis's eyes snapped wide open.

「Is that so? You are looking down on him and also on us too much.」

「——!」

The flash that Celis suddenly unleashed blinded Fugil's eyes.

The light reflected on the surrounding snow and became even more dazzling. It burned his retinas.

Celis who still couldn't move properly activated the Lightning Lance and released bright flash from its tip.

She still couldn't control her Drag-Ride to counterattack Fugil, but she could produce a bit of energy to at least produce blinding light.

In addition, for Fugil who owned physical ability and five senses that were several times better than normal human, the damage to his sight was also great.

But Fugil immediately closed his eyes and focused on his hearing. He searched for the whirring sound of the Drag-Rides.

Lux was flying straight toward him. He predicted the timing of his arrival and gathered energy to his head armor before releasing it as shockwave.

「—Howling Roar」

Even Fugil would find it hard to dodge Lux's charge while his sight was blocked.

And so he hindered Lux's flight with Howling Roar while flying backward using the recoil at the same time.

Fugil bought time and distance with that. And so he became able to summon Uroboros.

If Uroboros was summoned while Lux had not other allies around him, the difference in strength would become enormous and Fugil's victory would be fixed in stone.

「I won't.....let you-!」

—But, Lux easily dodged the wall of shockwave that was sent to him and approached right before Fugil.

「.....!?!」

Fugil's eyes opened wide. In that instant Lux flew toward Fugil who was flying backward from the recoil of his Howling Roar and swung down the Chaos Brand he brandished.

「——End Action」

The first slash was blocked by the great sword that Fugil immediately used as shield. However——Lux paid it no attention.

Lux rained down consecutive blows that were coming endlessly like a storm, not allowing Fugil to even catch his breath.

How did Lux slip through the wall of shockwave from Fugil's Howling Roar——.

It was related with the Reload on Fire that he activated at the same timing with Celis's flashbang.

The force of the shockwave was drastically reduced until a fragment of its original power using the compression strengthening.

And so the power of the Howling Roar was reduced until almost zero and Lux succeeded in taking Fugil by surprise.

But——the pressure that was caught on his armor and body would return by several folds in the later five seconds.

Therefore, Lux needed to bring down Fugil within these five seconds before the feedback damage descended on him.

「So you're coming to defeat me without thinking of the consequence. You're making a reckless gamble here.」

This was a method that Lux wouldn't be able to choose if his flesh hadn't become tougher due to Baptism. Even so the risk was still high.

With just five seconds of End Action—he couldn't even break through the defense of Fugil's Bahamut that had ended up with minimal armor.

Far from that, currently Lux was exposed to a terrifying threat.

In order to breakthrough Fugil's Howling Roar, he had used Reload on Fire beforehand.

The burden of the impact that he received from the beginning would attack him at the latter five seconds, but not only that, if he got attacked by Fugil's Bahamut in that latter five seconds, that damage would also get multiplied and his defeat would be unavoidable.

But, Lux needed to seal Fugil's hands in order to prevent him from summoning Uroboros.

And then—.

「You're holding me in check to prevent me from summoning Uroboros while waiting for your allies to recover, is that your plan? You're attacking with the readiness to self-destruct for that—」

「.....tsu!」

Lux unconsciously gulped hearing Fugil pointing out so.

Lux was exerting all his strength desperately without thinking of the damage from the recoil of compression strengthening after this was because he was entrusting a certain thing to his comrades.

He didn't want to entrust the dangerous role to her, but he judged that there was no other choice than that.

「I'm going to unite everyone's strength, to defeat you!」

Two seconds remaining until he entered the latter five seconds of Reload on Fire. Lux continued the End Action with everything he had to seal Fugil's movement. It was then,

—*Giinn!*

Lux's blade was suddenly deflected and the flow of his combo was severed.

「What a troublesome fellow. You become like that because you're mistaking other people's strength as your own strength. Someone who can't cut open the path by himself doesn't know that you will weaken by relying on others.」

「Why, how did my attack got stop—!?!」

End Action was a secret technique to rain down slashes without even taking a breath.

There was no gap between the attacks.

Even if Fugil could block the attacks with precision, he wouldn't have enough time to control the Drag-Ride so it would switch to attack after defending.

Therefore, once Lux managed to make the opponent blocked his first strike, it would be impossible for the opponent to switch to counterattack in the middle as long as Lux hadn't run out of breath.

Lux had tested it before in a one-on-one mock battle against Drag-Knight.

And yet—.

「That's only when talking about battle between two normal Drag-Knights isn't it? Two thirds of my armor has been removed by the Break Purge. And so—」

In exchange the moving speed of the Drag-Ride was also increasing even if it was only slightly.

Because the number of frame that had to be moved was decreasing, Fugil was able to take advantage of the gap in End Action.

「One more second—. This is where we say farewell, my wise younger brother.」

Fugil brandished his blade toward Lux who was unbalanced.

Right after that, the recoil from the latter half of Reload on Fire would come down on Lux with an impact that was multiplied by several times.

But Lux and Fugil heard a voice in that moment when the despair was going to arrive.

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「—Missing Faith」

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「—!？」

A black pulse was radiating from Philuffy's Typhon to the surrounding.

The Divine Raiment that nullified other Divine Raiment enveloped Lux and Fugil.

The next moment, Lux's defense made it in time to block the Chaos Brand that Fugil swung down.

「.....I, see!」

Fugil felt strange because Lux was moving even though he should be unable to. However Fugil understood what just happened after a moment passed.

The output of the two's Drag-Ride would be lowered as long as they were within the territory of Missing Faith.

But, the reason Lux could block his attack wasn't that.

Lux and Philuffy were working together to prevent the Reload on Fire backfiring to Lux using Missing Faith to erase it.

「That was one hell of an idea that you thought up just now. There was no man who ever thought up such thing even in these one thousand years.」

Even Fugil's memories throughout his eternal life never saw someone who used in reverse Typhon's Divine Raiment that erased even its ally's Divine Raiment.

Lux's scenario.

His tactic that freely used his power of imagination as weapon had grown until this degree from directly facing unimaginably powerful enemies and defeating them until now.

In addition—these girls who had competed against each other and polished themselves had also grown stronger together with him.

「HAAAAAAAAAH!」

Lux who was blocking Fugil's attack couldn't move his Drag-Ride well right away because Missing Faith was lowering its power output.

In exchange he personally drew out his Sword Device to slash at Fugil. But Fugil also did the same thing with Uroboros's Sword Device and blocked his slash.

「Kuh.....!」

If he was in point-blank range where his Drag-Ride couldn't move satisfactorily, he would slash with his Sword Device directly.

Lux and Fugil both reached that same conclusion.

However, the result was clear to see.

Kin!

With a high-pitched sound, Bahamut's Sword Device in Lux's hand was sent flying. It was revolving in the air.

Supposing that Lux managed to reach the same level in tactic and strategy against Fugil, Fugil still had his physical capability that surpassed even Abyss.

「You made one wrong move. Even if you manage to reach the same conclusion like me, you can't surpass me with that body of yours.」

「That's not necessarily true.」

Right after Lux made a smile to pretend to be tough, Fugil swung down Uroboros's Sword Device.

Instantly, Lux's body retreated along with his Drag-Ride. Fugil's attack cut through empty air.

「Lu-chan. Leave the rest, to me.」

「Yeah. Be careful.....Phi-chan」

The Pile Anchor that Lux reeled in before this was entwined around the torso of Lux's Drag-Ride.

With Typhon pulling on it, it was possible for him to escape even this situation where his movement was dulling.

From here Philuffy would serve as Fugil's opponent until Lux and Celis recovered.

Lux was anxious in his heart, but there was nothing he could do in this situation.

He could only pray for Philuffy's safety while focusing to be able to return back to the battle as quickly as possible.

「—Fu」

The expression of Fugil who was watching Lux retreating sported a slight smile.

He deflected a Pile Anchor that was fired toward him while making the anchor's chain entwined around a tree with Linker Pulse.

The next moment, crimson light of Reload on Fire was emitted from Fugil's armor before he turned around and ran away.

「So the preparation is finished? Then let's start, Arshalia.」

「.....!？」

Fugil suddenly chose to escape while leaving behind some ominous words. Lux gasped in realization and held his breath.

He hurriedly used Dragon Voice to contact Airi who was at the temple site.

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Part 17

『Airi——!? How is the situation over there? Is there anything strange?』

Airi who was wearing the special equipment type Divine Drag-Ride——Jormungandr raised her face when she was contacted by her brother.

『Are you safe Nii-san!? I'm the one who is worried about you. There is nothing strange at this side. We are putting up a good fight thanks to Fugil and Uroboros being hold back. But——』

『But?』

『No, it's nothing important.』

Airi hesitated to answer Lux's question.

It was only a slight discomfort that she felt, but she was hesitating whether it was something important enough to say in this situation.

『The remaining Diabolos that were encircling us are starting to move to a single point. What's more they aren't heading our way, but to the north of the base.』

『——?』

Several of the twenty Diabolos had been destroyed.

But, the moment they saw that they were in disadvantage, they swiftly changed direction and retreated.

Because they needed to protect the base where central was sleeping underground, Lisha and others couldn't chase after them too far and let

them left.

『.....』

He felt some kind of bad premonition.

Lux closed his mouth without being able to express it with words.

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Part 18

While Lux and Airi were in the middle of conversation through Dragon Voice.

Fugil and Arshalia had linked up and they were also conversing about an important strategy.

『—Fugil, are you seriously planning to do that? If by any chance it works, this forest will become unusable for some time.』

『Yeah. Defeating them without killing them has proved more troublesome than I thought. If I use more of Uroboros's energy to defeat them, it will become troublesome to do the world revision after that. From here I will use all my strength—to crush them.』

『It's unusual for you to meet enemies that forced you into such difficult battle.』

『.....』

Until now Fugil was focused to remove Lux alone.

He wanted to kept the balance of the world and watched over the ruling of the vessel of king that he discovered.

For Fugil whose objective was to ascertain the choice and the path that human took, he was reluctant to do this battle.

Especially if he erased all the people here who were each powerful Drag-Knight of their respective country. There was a possibility that it would cause domestic strife in their countries.

However Lux was had grown far stronger than Fugil imagined.

—No.

Lux had been polishing his strength to win over other people into his ally.

Lux's allies would synchronize their action with him, surmise his intention, and cooperate with each other to multiply their strength many times over.

Such strength was different from the strength of Fugil who had been keeping the balance of the world all alone for more than thousand years with overwhelming strength and the strength of Singlen who polished his own genius.

『They don't seem to be opponents—who I can go easy against for more than this.』

Fugil retreated from the direct confrontation because he had given up finishing off Lux alone as quickly as possible.

『Understood.』

That was to say it would be the crucial moment after this.

What was the reason Fugil intentionally led twenty Diabolos to here?

That secret plan was going to assault Airi and others after several more minutes.

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Part 19

「Quick, we have to go, to where Airi and everyone at.....」

Lux tried to stand up after sensing the unsettling signs. But Celis held him back.

Philuffy was already chasing after the retreating Fugil with her Typhon as fast as she could, but it would be difficult to catch up with Fugil that was wearing flying type, what's more with its armor already lightened.

In that case he also had to go in pursuit. Lux whipped his body to move, but,

「Wait a second Lux. Your body is still injured, you have to rest it at least a little. Besides even Fugil shouldn't be completely unharmed——」

Fugil's body should be considerably damaged after he stripped off his protective armor until the very limit and fought them in the kamikaze attack form.

Even with his endurance that far surpassed normal human, the damages they dealt to him should have some effect that couldn't be ignored.

Rather the possibility was high that he was exhausted and couldn't recover immediately just like Lux right now.

However——it was terrifying.

He didn't intend to underestimate Fugil at all, but he estimated that he would be able to obtain the advantage even if only slightly if he had the help of Celis and Philuffy while Fugil was separated from Uroboros's main body.

But in reality, even now after he was greatly successful in his surprise attack, Fugil still overcame them with his skill as Drag-Knight.

In addition, they still couldn't see the bottom of his strength.

Rather it felt like he was pulling out even more tricks the more they fought him.

「What can you do even if you head there in your condition right now? If you don't want to regret it, you should bear with it until you at least recover and can move around.」

「.....You're, right」

Lux listened to Celis's remonstration and collected himself.

He was losing himself because of Fugil's overwhelming strength and his fear of losing his comrades, but exactly because of that—it would be pointless for Lux to head there while he was unable to move decently like this.

「I'm sorry, Celis-senpai.」

「Let's believe in everyone. Those people who have trained together with you aren't that fragile.」

Celis was also feeling the same in wanting to head to where everyone was for even a second faster. It was clear to see from her trembling body.

Even so, she was trying to accomplish her duty as Syvalles's captain.

Celis gently hugged Lux's body that had been removed from his Drag-Ride.

Her body and her Drag-Ride's heater were warming his chilly body that was exposed to the blizzard.

「That's why, please rest your body right now for several minutes, until the feeling in your limbs return and the pain vanish. I will become the shield that protect you until then.」

Even Celis had gotten injured from her battle with Fugil, but right now she was holding Lux in her arms while driving her Lindwurm forward without resting.

She was intending to shoulder the role as transporter and bodyguard at the same time for Lux who was distracted and couldn't move.

Her consideration to Lux and her devotion made him felt deep affection toward this older girl once more.





He was really—blessed with great companions.

That was exactly why, he wanted to end this world that kept repeating in circle without losing anyone.

He renewed that feeling and closed his eyes for a bit.

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Part 20

「—I see. So that's the aim of these cheap tricks.」

Yoruka muttered to herself even with two strengthened Diabolos surrounding her. She sensed something out of place the instant she eliminated them.

During the fight, she was cleverly led to the west—away from the central base.

She had been hearing the sound of horn flute starting from the middle of the fight. From that she surmised that the opponent was cleverly guiding the Diabolos to distant Yoruka away from the base.

And then currently all the remaining Diabolos that were scattered to the four directions were starting to travel toward a single location.

The Artifact was advancing from the north of the base where Airi and others were. The Diabolos were converging around it.

That was troublesome in itself, but in exchange the attack from all directions to their side had also stopped and now they could concentrate their force into one.

Both sides were now about even in fighting potential.

No, if Lux's hypothesis about Uroboros's weak point was right on the money, Yoruka believed that the advantage would like in Lisha and others, the allied force but—.

Yoruka sensed the sign of bad omen was swelling up.

She still didn't know what would happen, but she felt that a threat that rivaled even that Ragnarok would appear.

The Diabolos that Fugil led here from the Garden wouldn't end as a mere diversion. He was hiding his aim to use them as his main force.

「Take care of Aruji-sama, everyone.」

Although she became convinced of her prediction, right now Yoruka couldn't head back immediately to help.

Right now she could only entrust Lux's safety to her comrades.

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Part 21

「Let's continue the work, Arshalia. Re-Alive^{Sacred Eclipse Toxin}」

Uroboros's special armament—Infinity had already produced a Drag-Ride. Its name was Hydra.

It was the Divine Drag-Ride that was once used by Gatouhan, the leader of the mercenary group Dragon Marauder. Its Divine Raiment was the power to combine two things of the same type into one.

The missing Diabolos that Airi detected from observing her radar wasn't just her imagination.

Fugil had created a more powerful specimen by combining Diabolos beforehand.

He was going to fuse the remaining Diabolos using that one as the base.

「GI, AAAAAAaAAAAAaAS.....!」

A repulsive roar reverberated loudly. In the middle of that, flesh and blood and bone and nerve and brain were mixed and compressed into one.

The sound of horn flute that Arshalia was playing gathered all the remaining Diabolos. They were fused into one and a super huge Abyss was born.

The specimen that was created with that method possessed a strength that equaled a Ragnarok.

However, this one was an improvised monster from several Diaobolos strengthened with Elixir getting forcefully blended into one.

Therefore, unlike Ragnarok that had been set up from its foundation to be a powerful Abyss, this specimen's operation hours was limited.

And that specimen right now had started advancing together with the sound of the horn flute.

「—The fusion is successful Fugil. What's left is to launch a joint attack with Uroboros just as planned. You should rest for a bit. You have been too reckless even with your superhuman body. I will administer the recovery medicine to you.」

「.....Looks like, I got a bit too fired up. When I saw that man.....Lux, I got too rash against my better judgment.」

Fugil smiled wryly while gripping his trembling wrist.

Fugil had overwhelmed Lux in this battle.

But, even though he was overwhelmed, Lux wouldn't give up and kept hounding him.

He did that not for his own sake, but for his comrade.

He was giving everything he got for the sake of the people he wanted to protect.

Seeing that figure—it reminded him of himself in the past. That figure looked radiant to him.

(The past? What am I thinking? I'm still carrying out my mission even now.)

The dream from thousands of years ago that Arshalia and Fugil saw was still continuing even now.

And yet, why was he feeling nostalgic right now after seeing Lux's figure—?

Even though he had never felt something like sentimentality anymore since then no matter how much time passed.

「What I should do—is only one. To accomplish my objective, the mission of a hero.」

Within this endless path that continued for eternity, there was a sight that Arshalia and Fugil was aiming for. He couldn't possibly stop walking it.

He would knock down all obstacles on his way and kept going forward.

「Move forward Arshalia. We're taking back Avalon.」

「Yes, my master.」

Fugil entered inside Uroboros and gave instruction to the Automata sitting in the cockpit inside the head.

The huge dark red devil flew through the sky toward the enemy camp along with the sound of the horn flute.

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Part 22

「What is——that!? That's completely different from anything before this!!」

Meanwhile, Lisha had instructed everyone to reorganize their formation once all the Diabolos withdrew. Now she was letting out a shaky voice once the monster appeared from the northwest once more.

Even Airi who was looking at it from afar warned everyone in panic.

The super huge Abyss with strange shape that suddenly appeared was approaching their way with great speed.

「I don't know what is that but——this is bad. That Abyss is most likely as strong as a Ragnarok!」

If it was just a Ragnarok, it might be strange to say it like that, but if everyone here combined their strength, it wasn't an opponent that they couldn't win against.

But, Uroboros that was behind the monster was also starting to advance with great speed.

「That Abyss seems to be the fusion of Diabolos that had been injected with a lot of Elixir until they went wild. Perhaps it won't be able to live long. But——」

The reactions of Abysses that were projected in the radar had gathered into a spot a while ago.

Airi made her hypothesis from her experience of fighting similar Abysses several times. She guessed the true identity of the huge Abyss correctly.

However, in this situation where some of their main fighters that were Lux, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka were away from the base, it would be dangerous for them if the enemy concentrated their attack to them.

Their tactic to surround Uroboros and seal its movement would be unusable unless their side's lineup was all gathered.

「Our tactic, is seen through.....!? At this rate——」

Airi who was clad in Jormungandr spoke with a voice that was trembling with uneasiness after seeing the approaching threat.

They had obtained the information about Uroboros's abilities from the AI Arshalia in Avalon's central.

Even if the information contained no clear weakness, Lux thought up countermeasure from it and prepared a plan to intercept the enemy, but naturally the plan wouldn't work against an Abyss at Ragnarok level.

In addition, Uroboros would also attack at the same time. It would be almost impossible to deal with this.

「Airi? What's the matter? They will arrive to the base if you don't quickly order to attack.」

Noct who was nearby as her guard turned around and asked her.

The command for this battle on the whole was entrusted to Airi instead of Lisha or Lux.

Lisha would stick to her role as a commander leading a squad.

However——Airi was falling into confusion when facing this unexpected development.

Airi who had been supporting everyone as the unit's secretary until now realized once more how amazing Lux and Lisha were.

(Nii-san, Lisha-sama, everyone else too.....they came this far even while feeling this much pressure?)

But, right now wasn't the time to feel admiration.

As the one who was entrusted with this place, she had to give her answer even if it would end up a mistake.

(But, even I 'm not staying here without any resolve of my own!)

Airi fired up herself and opened her mouth to give instruction. It was then,

『—Airi, can you hear me? It's me..... I can't stop Fugil, sorry.』

『Nii-san! Are you safe? Eh? This Dragon Voice's signal patten, it's from Celis-senpai's—』

Airi reacted to Lux's voice while also asking.

After Lux's battle with Fugil, both sides became unable to continue fighting. Fugil had withdrawn for the moment. In order to preserve his stamina, Lux was carried by Celis's Lindwurm even though she was also injured. Now he was telling Airi that they were heading to the base over there.

『I already know about the giant Abyss from Phi-chan contacting me. It looks like they fused all the remaining Diabolos using some kind of method.』

『The enemy is already just a stone throw away from this base. Diabolos is already closing in while slightly behind it is Uroboros—. What should we do? Nii-san!』

『Yeah. We have to start by defeating the Diabolos first. But—that's just what Fugil and Arshalia are expecting us to do.』

Uroboros's weak point—actually it was practically nonexistent.

But if he had to name one even then, he thought a countermeasure against gigantic weapon would be effective against it.

Because Uroboros was a gigantic Divine Drag-Ride, it boasted overwhelming destructive power, defense, firepower, and so on because of its great mass. No other Drag-Ride could possibly come close to it.

—But, there were many things where merit and demerit were like the two sides of the same coin.

That great size could backfire. If the opponent could get in close to it, it would be hard for Uroboros's attack to hit.

In addition, because the joints part of the armor also huge, if those gaps were attacked, the enormous mass would become great burden that made the Drag-Ride brittle instead.

In order to compensate for those weak points, it had the special armament Infinity and Zero One.

Fugil would pilot various Divine Drag-Rides to intercept Drag-Ride that closed in to Uroboros. He would kick out the opponent into the range where Uroboros would then attack.

He could also use Zero One to erase the enemy Drag-Ride that got close.

There was also Endless to seal the enemy's countermeasure by changing the world's principle.

—After listening until that point, it was already the same like declaring there wasn't any weak point.

In order to conquer the impregnable fortress, it would be necessary to take away those weapons one by one.

Infinity and Zero One and Endless.

They would surround Uroboros and drove it into a situation where it could only evade by using those three weapons, then created a situation where its

defensive methods were insufficient. That was Lux's aim.

If they had Yoruka with them, her Divine Raiment to control other Drag-Ride—Spell Code would become a considerable threat—but she was lured away by Fugil's diversionary action and couldn't return.

In addition the opponent created a super Diabolos and positioned it as a vanguard to erase one of Uroboros's few weaknesses. It was coming to assault the allied force's base.

『Fugil and Arshalia's objective is to make the Diabolos and our main force clashes while Uroboros is attacking from the rear.』

Uroboros boasted absolute strength without compare as long as it kept the fighting in middle range.

Even if the giant Diabolos's lifespan could only hold for several minutes, their side would have to intercept it by sending all their members against an enemy in the level of Ragnarok.

The opponent was planning to decide the battle in that short time.

Fugil getting injured to the point that he couldn't move for a while was most likely outside their expectation, but even with that entered into the consideration, the opponent was still holding overwhelming advantage—Lux's side was being cornered to a predicament right now.

『I know. But—what can we do now.....』

Airi hung down her head while hearing Lux pointing out those and asked him.

They were cornered into this situation where they were aware that they were in disadvantage, but they had no other choice but fighting—however, Airi was feeling reassured that her brother Lux was listening to her worry.

『There is just one—way to overcome this. Can you take a risk with my instruction?』

『——! I, understand』

At the end of their conversation, Lux immediately formed a countermeasure.

And then Airi conveyed her brother's instruction to everyone in the allied force.

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Part 23

「—The plan got slightly out of order, but this battle is now settled with this. They have no choice but to meet that Diabolos head on. It's checkmate for them.」

Inside the giant head of Uroboros, the Automata Arshalia was sitting on the cockpit seat. She was muttering while watching the sight a few hundred ml ahead of her.

Due to Fugil's plan, Lux, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka were separated from their base and couldn't be present here.

They would need several minutes until they could gather all the main fighting force of Syvalles here.

But during those several minutes, the allied force wouldn't be able to endure the all-out attack of Arshalia and the Diabolos.

She believed that the battle had been as good as finished with this.

『Arshalia, don't let your guard down.』

The voice of Fugil who was receiving treatment inside Uroboros was transmitted to her as a command.

While she was an artificial ego, Arshalia felt conflicted to be called with that name.

『The Lux who I fought briefly just now has reached a height that surpassed my expectation. You can't underestimate them. That guy might have sent a new instruction to the bunch over there.

『I see. However, I don't think there will be anything more they can do——』

『Exactly. Let's see what they've got. There is no more need for battle of wits in this fight.』

『Then excuse me——』

Arshalia cut off the communication with Fugil and focused on the battle before her eyes.

She was an Automata. A different person who was bequeathed with Arshalia's name.....no, she wasn't even a person.

However, there was this feeling inside her. She wondered what was this feeling that she harbored toward her master Fugil?

(I want to——make his wish come true. He is always facing forward even while suffering from his mission as hero without throwing it away. I want to become his support. It's only natural for a tool like me to carry out that duty.)

Therefore, she would smash into the allied force with her power as a machine without any mercy.

She mobilized all the battle power available to her and sent out a sure-win attack.

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「——GU-ooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOON!」

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A roar that shook the air like electric shock reverberated until the temple site where Airi and others were encamped.

The super large Diabolos had been strengthened by Elixir as well as having nearly twenty other Diabolos fused with it. It flapped its wings and charged

forward in a straight line.

Its aim was Airi who was equipping Jormungandr.

It lifted up its claws that had become as big as a log after the fusion and fixed its aim. In that instant——.

「——Legion!」

Lisha launched Tiamat's special armament. The arrowhead-shaped projectile weapons flit right in front of Diabolos's eyes.

But, it immediately lifted up its claws and smashed one of the Legions.

「What!?!」

Lisha's eyes snapped wide open in surprise from that reaction speed and physical strength.

Its physical ability rivaled a Ragnarok as expected. The only salvation was that it didn't possess any special ability.

Although Lisha's diversionary attack was blocked, Greifer wearing Divine Drag-Ride Cuelebre closed his distance with the Diabolos using that opening. He slashed with his Tail Blade.

The giant Diabolos blocked it with his arm, but the slash that possessed unique trajectory that drew an arc managed to stab its chest with the blade's tip.

「Too naïve. Trying to kill us with an Abyss that got its brain downgraded is just——.....tsu!?!」

However Greifer's eyes opened wide in shock at the next moment.

He should have stabbed Diabolos's chest with the blade that was filled with enough energy, but the Abyss paid it no mind.

It blew out scorching flame from its mouth as counterattack. Greifer was swallowed by the great heat along with his armor.

The attack's temperature and range were more than ten times the normal Diabolos.

A normal human who got swallowed by that flame would have their flesh melted and their lungs burned, but Greifer had expected it and executed his countermeasure.

「——Photon Dive!」

He activated the Divine Raiment of invincibility that deflected every kind of attack energy.

Diabolos was hit by the heat that radiated from the deflected flame. Its skin slightly melted.

Even so—the Diabolos that was in rampaging state due to the Elixir didn't stop its attack.

「——Gia, GUAAAAooOOOOOOOOOON!」

It used both its hands to grab Cuelebre's armor that stiffened from guarding using invincibility while continuing to blow out its deadly breath.

It sealed Greifer's movement without caring that its own body also got burned.

「Hah, it's also troubling to face something so indiscriminate like this. So you don't give a damn even if you go to hell together with me eh?」

Even its intelligence was already dissolving due to the Elixir's influence.

The only thing it had was the killer instinct to destroy its target.

It didn't intend to let go of Greifer until the Divine Raiment of invincibility got turned off.

「Lisha-sama! Help out Greifer-san!」

「I can't. Even if I fire Sevens Heads, it'll only get deflected by Photon Dive from this angle!」

With Diabolos completely grappling with Greifer, she also couldn't use Suppressor to affect Diabolos alone.

There was also a method of shooting gravity sphere to defeat the monster, but Greifer would die the moment his Photon Dive ran out like that.

Rosa's Gorynych was holding up its Cannon at the ready. But its power wouldn't be enough to defeat the super Diabolos.

Aeril too couldn't move right now because her stamina was used up for contracting with the central.

There wasn't anybody in this place who could save Greifer from his predicament.

There was only several seconds left until the Divine Raiment's activation time limit arrived and Photon Dive vanished.

(—Tsk, so it's time I steel myself huh. To think I'll get done in by this kind of monster)

Greifer was gradually realizing that he had no way to breakthrough this situation where he couldn't even twitch. But the inside of his head was calm.

From the beginning he was already aware that no matter how skilled a Drag-Knight he was, sooner or later death would come for him as long as he continued to stand on the battlefield.

Such risk wouldn't exist only in a battle where he possessed an overwhelming advantage that it couldn't even be called a fight. But Greifer didn't believe that such a battle could be called good.

—That was why, he could accept dying like this.

But, it wasn't satisfying. He still hadn't given his all until there was nothing left.

At the very least he wanted to die after doing the minimum work of dealing with this super Diabolos.

(Why am I thinking like this? Am I really that kind of person who want to be useful for other, this me?)

Greifer laughed at himself inside his heart.

When Greifer was driven to the slums at his childhood, he lived following his own pride.

He accidentally caught the eyes of the princess of Vanheim Dukedom and she picked him up, but he didn't think that it was the cause of the drastic change in his fate.

Greifer thought that he would be satisfied if he was able to persist with his lone wolf way of living.

Greifer had prepared himself for the words and closed his eyes, but then they snapped open and he put his strength into controlling the Drag-Ride.

(—I wonder why. When I'm with those guys, it doesn't feel that bad damn it. It's also not that bad to fight for the sake of something.)

Greifer struck Diabolos's face with Tail Blade. He kept struggling to split the enemy's focus as much as possible.

Even so the Diabolos didn't even flinch and continued breathing out fire.

The countdown until the invincibility came down was approaching.

(That's right—I can't stomach it, having that bastard Fugil deciding everything for us as he pleased)

At that time, the head of the super Diabolos shook. A part of it got frozen.

The sudden impact made the Diabolos stopped breathing out flame and turned only its neck to look behind.

「Greifer! Run!」

Krulcifer in her Fafnir appeared at the western sky and raised her voice.

Until now she was holding back Uroboros under Airi's order, but she learned of Greifer's predicament and came to back him up.

「—You idiot, why the hell you showed up here!」

The area around the super Diabolos—it was within the range of Uroboros's attack.

Greifer avoided getting instantly killed after his Photon Dive was turned off, but in exchange Krulcifer got caught within Uroboros range.

「Krulcifer. As an Automata I cannot bring myself to kill a Key's Supervisor like you, but there is no other way. Prepare yourself.」

The instant Automata Arshalia muttered so, *GOU-!*, the atmosphere roared and a slash from Uroboros's gigantic Blade lunged forward.

Even if Krulcifer predicted the attack with her Wise Blood, the range and timing of this attack couldn't be evaded.

Arshalia too reflexively attacked because she was convinced that this was a great chance, but—.

「I don't think I have lost my composure so much that I need my inadequacy pointed out by a hothead like you though?」

Krulcifer made a smile that was mixed with sarcasm. She slid horizontally along with Fafnir and dodged the attack from Uroboros's giant blade just barely.

「.....tsu!?!」

『Looks like it was us who got baited, Arshalia.』

Fugil who was in the middle of treatment spoke to the bewildered Arshalia.

Arshalia had perfectly grasped Fafnir's capability. The attack that she launched should be impossible to dodge, but the reality spoke differently.

That was simply because there was other power that moved Krulcifer.

「I have been counting on the assist of Mahaprana from Soffice's Vritra from the beginning——」

DOGOOOO-!

Right after that, the attack from swinging down a Blade that was as big as a tower dealt a tremendous impact to the area.

However, Uroboros launched its next attack at the same time when its first attack was dodged.

——*DOU-!*

The main cannon that was stretching out from Uroboros's stomach activated and fired an extremely thick laser.

Its target was Jormungandr——in other words Airi who was five hundred ml away in the temple site.

「Lisha-sama!」

「I know! Sevens Heads!」

In respond Lisha also received the command from Airi and intercepted the attack with her main cannon.

The two waves of energy clashed and explosion occurred at the center of it. Black smoke was rising from there.

The field of vision was covered by black smoke and both sides couldn't see the other side with their naked eyes, but Uroboros that was equipped with special equipment type's abilities could detect the enemies' positions with its radar.

The super huge Diabolos was also still going strong, but it was a type of monster that detected its prey using its five senses, so its movement was sealed.

Arshalia nodded in understanding and felt admiration at the response of Lisha and others.

From behind Typhon that was piloted by Philuffy was approaching.

They rescued Greifer while also taking position to surround Uroboros.

It would take several seconds until the black smoke cleared up.

If they could complete the formatin to surround Uroboros and destroyed the Diabolos before that—.

The Automata guessed that the aim of the allied force was most likely that.

「Too naïve. Just this much won't pose any problem.」

Right after Arshalia muttered so, she took out her horn flute and placed it on her mouth.

And then, she gave a new order to the giant Diabolos using Uroboros's voice amplification.

.

—*IiiiIIII!*

.

Arshalia predicted that the allied force would slip into the black smoke to surround Uroboros. So she decided to breakthrough from the front.

It would be difficult of Airi to move because she was using Jormungandr that was fixed in place. If she could finish her off, the allied force would lose their commander.

(After that—they won't have any more chance of victory.)

Uroboros charged energy into the main cannon in its stomach once more while brandishing up its giant blade inside the black smoke.

At the same time, it also gathered energy into its legs and used the device located at the back of its armored legs, making Uroboros leaping backward with Step like a Drake.

「——!？」

Uroboros instantly retreated until several hundred ml backwards from the black smoke area.

The reason it did that wasn't only for escaping from the encirclement, but also because of the command Arshalia gave to the Diabolos.

The order of self-destruction——.

She made the Diabolos self-destruct because its remaining lifespan wouldn't last long anyway. With this the enemy camp would be destroyed.

She had been waiting for the timing to explode the Diabolos from the start since it was fused and strengthened.

「They won't have any way to block this with their defensive power. This is the end.」

『——No, you're wrong.』

The prediction that Arshalia muttered was denied by the voice of Fugil who was in the middle of treatment.

『It looks like the enemies are also aiming to take advantage of the black smoke.』

「.....tsu!」

Arshalia began acting just as planned even while she was feeling bewildered.

She fired the main cannon in the stomach while readying Uroboros to slash with its giant Blade.

The temple site's ground surface should become scorched earth from the synergy of the giant Diabolos's self-destruct and Uroboros's attack—but,

「The explosion is—far smaller than it should be?」

Arshalia noticed something strange the moment the black smoke cleared.

She only found the unarmed allied force there.

「Mahaprana—I changed the direction of sound wave you made so that Diabolos couldn't hear it.」

Soffice said that from her Vritra to expose the trick.

Arshalia split her focus for a moment to understand the situation, however she immediately chose the most effective method to counterattack.

Although Diabolos's self-destruct was sealed, Uroboros's attack boasted unbelievable power.

Therefore, she was going to step forward this time to mow down Airi's location, however she noticed something strange at the armored legs.

「It's too bad—you are already surrounded. It's thanks to Lux-kun's plan.」

Hovering in the air in front of her eyes was Krulcifer who was particularly fused with Fafnir using Full Connect.

When she checked, the right armored leg was restrained by Typhon's Pile Anchor, while the left armored leg was hugged by Rosa's Gorynych that

entered its Devilmachia mode to stop it from moving.

Everyone there mustered all the strength they could exert to stop Uroboros from moving.

「Did the smokescreen just now acted as the signal? In order to lure me to attack and captured me like this——」

Arshalia's analysis was right on the money.

From the beginning Lisha and others had accumulated many wounds from the intense battle that couldn't be fully healed with just the short rest they had.

Even with their best estimation, they wouldn't be able to fight for five minutes in their full power.

That was why they gambled everything into this situation.

Uroboros's Divine Raiment and special armament were certainly powerful without equal, but they intentionally wouldn't use it when they were in the advantage.

The theory was to save them for overturning the situation when they were at disadvantage, but there was a weakness there.

Someone who possessed a trump card that was too powerful would be scared to use it pointlessly. That fear restricted their own hand.

That was why they wouldn't use it while they still had Diabolos acting as the vanguard while they observed how the opponent would act.

However, Arshalia couldn't deal with the situation now it suddenly changed into a predicament for her.

『If they use all of Uroboros's abilities in turn, we won't have any hope for victory even if we band together.』

Lux told Airi that before telling her his plan. The plan was to make the enemy thought the situation favored them, and then they would overturn the situation instantly and surrounded the opponent.

He thought up the broad action patterns and acted to achieve that aim while also adapting to the unexpected situations.

In order to achieve that aim, the prerequisite was to cause damage to Fugil alone until he couldn't take action for a while—. Lux barely fulfilled that condition even while he himself got heavily wounded.

.

『—Everyone! Please give everything you have for this chance that Nii-san created for us!』

『—Roger』 『Roger!』 『Roger!』 『Roger!』 『Roger.....』
『Roger』

.

Several voices of Drag-Knights overlapped in respond to Airi's Dragon Voice.

They were once enemy, they were people who never got involved with each other before this.

But now all of them were connected by each other through Lux at the end of the battle.

Airi didn't know whether Lux had the qualification as king or not. However—.

(For me, Nii-san is undoubtedly a hero. He saved the sickly me, make everyone live in happiness, and open the path to the future. Nii-san, he's—)

Airi who was focused with doing logistical support as a secretary could muster her courage was also thanks to Lux.

It was also thanks to the Triad who were guarding her.

This battle was a reckless one——.....Fugil was too powerful of an enemy. That was what everyone thought.

However, if it was Lux who had broken down every kind of difficulties and caused miracles until now, they could believe in him.

A Drag-Ride danced in the sky as though to embody that will.

「——Drake Horn & Suppressor!」

Several seconds ago when black smoke was covering the area, Lisha was summoning and equipping her Over Unit, a supplemental armor created from dismantling other Drag-Ride.

Drake Horn was equipped with the abilities of special equipment type. At the same time it also strengthened Divine Raiment's power output.

She fired super gravity that distorted even the space. It made the giant Diabolos to be pinned down on the ground.

「——Wise Blood Accel!」

Krulcifer saw that and flew to in front of Uroboros before shooting it with her Freezing Cannon.

She targeted the joints of the giant armor frame with rapid fire.

The first freezing bullet hit the reinforced glass that covered the cockpit in the head where Arshalia was sitting.

Arshalia was flustered with a part of her field of vision taken away.

(Our sight is blocked!? Even though I can grasp their position in general using the radar, I can't sense their movement in detail! But——)

If she used the special armament Zero One, she would be able to instantly remove this freezing effect.

However her rational thought that she couldn't use one of her powerful special armaments for something trivial like that held her back.

Then—she would use the overwhelming mass of Uroboros to mow down a wide area using the giant Blade that was like a tower, attacking the enemies indiscriminately.

But before she could do so, Greifer in his Cuelebre jumped right on the trajectory of the slash.

「—!？」

Against the Divine Rament of invincibility, Photon Dive, any attack would be deflected no matter how powerful it was.

Of course the Automata Arshalia had launched her attack with the timing so that Greifer wouldn't be able to get in the way but—.

「It ain't funny if you look down on my Divine Drag-Ride too much yeah. Well, it's plain so it's hard to understand though.」

「Tsu.....! So that's it!」

Greifer's bold tone made Arshalia noticed that her actions had been predicted.

If Greifer scattered Mist Cypher that was made from metal particles, he could get away from radar detection.

However, this tactic would be impossible without Krulcifer taking away Uroboros's sight so that it couldn't grasp the truth.

This was the result of the commander Airi informing the whole force about the battle situation using Dragon Voice and everyone putting their trust in the plan.

「—But!」

Arshalia's next move was using the main cannon in Uroboros's stomach.

The giant cannon barrel roared. It fired an arrow of energy with destructive power that rivaled Sevens Heads.

Greifer who possessed powerful defense was already using his Divine Raiment. Lisha was also restraining Diabolos, so her movement was restricted.

The other Divine Drag-Rides were also surrounding Uroboros's main body, so this cannon shot couldn't be stopped.

「Can you block this one? Can all of you overcome this trial!？」

At this rate the allied force's base, the temple site where Airi and Jormungandr were positioned along with Lisha who was lined up in a single line would be shot down.

But—.

「Wha-!」

Jerk, Uroboros's posture crumbled slightly just before it fired its cannon.

When she checked, Typhon and Gorynych each pulled Uroboros's giant armored legs to different direction and shifted the main cannon's firing angle.

This tactic itself was just as planned by Airi and others.

But, the snows that were piling up on the ground was derailing their calculation.

Typhon and Gorynych were land battle type Divine Drag-Ride. Because of that when pulling something, the frictional force would increase their pulling force.

Conversely, with the ground covered with snow like this, they were unsuited to move Uroboros that boasted an overwhelming mass with brute force.

「——Mahaprana!」

Soffice noticed the lack of pulling force and used Vritra's Divine Raiment to shift the trajectory of Uroboros's cannon shot.

But that too was difficult to do when the target was a cannons hot that possessed overwhelming amount of energy.

『——Everyone, please brace yourself! A bombardment is coming!』

They barely managed to make the bombardment miss a direct hit, but it still grazed near the base.

「Gu-ah!」

「Tsuuu.....!」

Their armor's surface was scraped off. The after wave from the overwhelming energy hit their body.

Lisha and Tiamat were sent flying backward, while the Triad who were protecting Airi also got scattered to the wind.

Even so——Airi was able to barely endure so that the Jormungandr didn't get dispelled.

「Airi.....! Be careful, Diabolos isn't restrained anymore now!」

「I, understand!」

Noct who was swept off her feet from the shockwave desperately raised her voice while lying face down on the ground.

Because Lisha was blown away, the super Diabolos that was suppressed by Suppressor should become able to move freely.

It was only an accidental misfortune that came from the slippery ground due to the snow, but they were cornered into a despairing predicament just from that.

From a glance it looked like Airi and others were carrying the battle to their favor, but they didn't have the slightest leeway available for them.

Rather, if they didn't use this chance to destroy Uroboros, their defeat would be inevitable with their current condition that was exhausted from the consecutive battles.

『I'll hold out over here no matter what! So everyone, destroy Uroboros—』

It would be difficult for Airi to survive even for a few minutes when facing the revived super Diabolos by herself, but she mustered her courage and yelled that.

The members who heard her words through the Dragon Voice also resolved themselves.

「Let's go everyone! All-out attack—!」

Krulcifer took a deep breath and gave command in Airi's place.

『—Roger.』

Their target was one of the three Force Cores that were moving Uroboros—the one sleeping inside its stomach. The other two were located in its shoulder and head, but the one in the stomach was the biggest and easiest to damage.

Based on the information that Lux heard from the AI Arshalia, it was located right above the part where the cannon was installed.

Naturally—that part was also covered with a tough barrier and armor. Half-hearted attack wouldn't go through.

The barrier was thinning because of the energy consumption after firing the main cannon, even so the defensive power there couldn't be penetrated with the average firepower.

Singlen poured water into the joints of Uroboros's mobile frame and froze it before expanding the ice's capacity to destroy it from the inside. He bought time by making it unable to move.

The method of Lisha and others was different.

Rosa's Gorynych raised its armored arm's claws toward the shell of the giant cannon.

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—*GAGIGIGIGIGi!*

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The barrier was tore apart and the armor surface was scratched off along with a grating sound.

「Something like that—is only itchy!」

Uroboros's right arm that was bounced back along with its giant Blade couldn't return to its position immediately, but Rosa was located at slightly to the left of the stomach.

Thus Uroboros's giant left armored fist descended to crush her.

But, the movement of that arm strayed greatly and hit its own stomach.

「—Damn-!?!」

Arshalia thought that she messed up her control, but that wasn't the case.

The opponent that she ought to be the most wary against—, had arrived to right beside Uroboros without her noticing.

『Yoruka-san!』

Airi noticed her presence and unconsciously raised her voice.

Yoruka and Yato no Kami were standing on the left armored arm of Uroboros.

She returned while hiding herself with camouflage to approach Uroboros undetected.

And then she used Spell Code to control Uroboros's left arm.

「As I thought it's difficult to completely control a Drag-Ride this huge. But——」

「Yes, leave it to me. Now I can destroy the targett!」

Rosa equipped with Gorynych in Devilmachia mode tore off Uroboros's abdomen shell with the brute power of more than ten Drag-Ride.

And then as though she had been waiting for that moment, a Pile Anchor was launched into it. Philuffy then reeled in the wire to pull herself up.

Typhon's right hand was already filled with all her remaining energy.

「Biting Flare!? This is bad. If the Force Core is hit with that right now——Zero One!」

Arshalia targeted the approaching Philuffy and activated Zero One.

Philuffy got temporarily teleported into Uroboros—which meant she was made to vanish.

With this the danger right in front of her was averted but——, she also couldn't just stay motionlessly like this.

There was a chance that Uroboros would be manipulated by Yoruka's Spell Code and Philuffy got forcefully released.

「But, as long as I can endure here, as long as I can overcome just this moment——」

Uroboros's Force Core couldn't be stopped unless the opponent could produce high destructive power instantly.

The moment Arshalia spoke out that thought of hers—, a huge beam came flying toward her.

「Wha—!?!」

A long-range bombardment from Tiamat's Sevens Heads was fired toward Uroboros's stomach that had gotten its armor broken.

Lisha who should be sent flying by her main cannon just now was already getting back on her feet? Arshalia's eyes opened wide in confusion.

Because Tiamat's Suppressor had been halted, she shouldn't be able to do something like this with the super Diabolos getting her way, and yet,

「It's irritating that you're looking down on our strength. There is no one here who isn't giving this battle their all.」

「.....」

Krulcifer's words didn't reach the ears of Arshalia who was paralyzed with surprise.

But, she managed to see the super Diabolos lying on top of the snow with its whole body frozen.

The super Diabolos was buried into the snow due to the super gravity it was hit with until just a little while ago.

The instant Suppressor was dispelled, Mel made use of that situation and immediately froze it with Ddraig Gwiber's Divine Raiment of temperature control.

Meanwhile Lisha's little sister Alma caught Lisha who was blown away along with her armor and helped her get back on her feet so that she could immediately fired Sevens Heads at Uroboros.

Some of their coordination was planned, while some were their reflexive action after seeing the situation.

Everyone here was single-mindedly heading toward a single objective without leaving anyone behind.

(I cannot block that....., with my strength—I can't protect Uroboros anymore!)

The solidarity of the allied force here had strengthened even more compared to the battle against all Seven Dragon Paladins.

The Automata Arshalia was falling into a situation that was beyond her capability to deal with and her thought was about to freeze—, it was then a voice resounded inside the head of everyone there.

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【—The effect of attack and ability from Drag-Ride toward lifeless material is now invalid.】

.

The attack that was filled with all the strengths of everyone who gathered under Lux's will disappeared before it could bear fruit.

.

Part 24

At the sky of the Ancient Forest. The blizzard was getting stronger.

Celis was in the middle of flying slowly with Lindwurm while carrying Lux in her arms. They could see Uroboros from afar. A territory made from faint light enveloped its surrounding.

Uroboros's Divine Raiment—it was the unbelievable ability to rewrite the principle of the world within its territory. This territory was centered around Uroboros with the radius of several kl.

The principle that was changed by that ability was broadcasted directly into Lux and Celis's heads too just now.

「Lux, just now..... The meaning of that principle made by Endless—」

「Yes. Surely Airi and Lisha-sama were cornering Fugil and Arshalia.」

Endless that altered the principle of the world itself consumed tremendous amount of energy to use.

According to the information that he heard from the AI Arshalia, it could only be used five or six times per day at maximum.

That was only if the energy was fully charged. With its current energy Lux assessed that Uroboros's limit was around three times. Just now it had been used once.

For the enemy to go that far, it meant that they had become unable to defend using other special armaments or perhaps they had judged that they would be able to defeat the allied force with certainty using this. Those were the two likely possibilities.

Either way, the battle situation was greatly changed to favor one side with the principle alteration just now.

「Lux, are your body alright now? If you can equip your Divine Drag-Ride again now—let's hurry!」

Celis's voice was trembling with nervousness.

Lux's stamina hadn't recovered.

The damage he received from Fugil also still hurt.

But, he had reached a level where he could just barely fight.

Celis was also the same.

That was why she was asking him that question.

Even if they mustered all their remaining strength, fighting with full power for several minutes would be their limit.

Even if Lisha and the others were in danger right now, they didn't have any strength remaining for protecting them.

If they didn't attack, if they didn't defeat Fugil and Uroboros right now, they would never win.

Celis was aware that without that resolve and preparation, they would only get defeated without being able to do anything when they arrived there.

「—Please go, Celis-senpai.」

「Yes.」

Lux took a deep breath and unsheathed his Sword Device once more.

He wondered why.

Even though he couldn't see Fugil at all from this range with the blizzard obstructing his sight—.

(Fugil is, Nii-san is—waiting for me to come.)

Lux was convinced of that inside his chest.

That the next time they clashed, everything would be decided—.

.

Part 25

「So that guy, has finally woke up——」

Magialca was staying hidden behind a pillar of the temple site——behind Lolotte's Drake. Sweats were trickling down from her forehead.

The temple site where the allied force's base was located.

A jet black Divine Drag-Ride was hovering above it.

After the battle against Lux, Fugil received treatment inside Uroboros. But now he put on Bahamut and showed up outside.

At the same time he also activated Uroboros's Divine Raiment. It overturned the battle situation instantly.

「Our attack, was erased.....!?!」

On the sky slightly east from the temple site, Lisha was in shock.

The bombardment from Sevens Heads that she fired just now definitely hit the half destroyed stomach of Uroboros.

But, there was no damage or any trace of destruction from that attack.

That attack which she expected would destroy the Force Core landed perfectly. And yet it didn't do anything.

「Ane-ue, just now——Uroboros's principle alteration was.....」

Alma who was hovering beside Lisha wearing EX Wyvern spoke to her with trembling voice.

It was their best chance. But Fugil overturned the fatal predicament that Arshalia was in.

He performed mind control operation using Uroboros's Sword Device in his possession.

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【—The effect of attack and ability from Drag-Ride toward lifeless material is now invalid.】

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Lisha and everyone else had heard the principle that was ruling over the Ancient Forest right now. They understood its meaning.

The effect toward lifeless material was invalid—, that was to say, not even Divine Raiment could affect the gigantic Divine Drag-Ride Uroboros and Automata Arshalia. It was the same as giving them absolutely unbreakable defense.

【—The effect of attack and ability from Drag-Ride toward lifeless material is now invalid.】

「I see, that's easy to understand. That's why that armor got spat out without its pilot—」

Typhon's armor had materialized at Uroboros's feet. Yoruka muttered while looking at it.

Philuffy had been captured inside Uroboros from some time ago due to the special armament Zero One, but her armor had reappeared outside without its rider.

Even Zero One, the ability of Uroboros's own special armament became invalid against inorganic material.

After that it seemed Zero One was turned off and Philuffy came out. She immediately picked her Sword Device and succeeded in equipping Typhon

once more.

「Grand Buster!」

Right after the situation was overturned, Mel fired the warhead that was created by Ddraig Gwiber's special armament.

Her aim was the super Diabolos that was frozen on the ground.

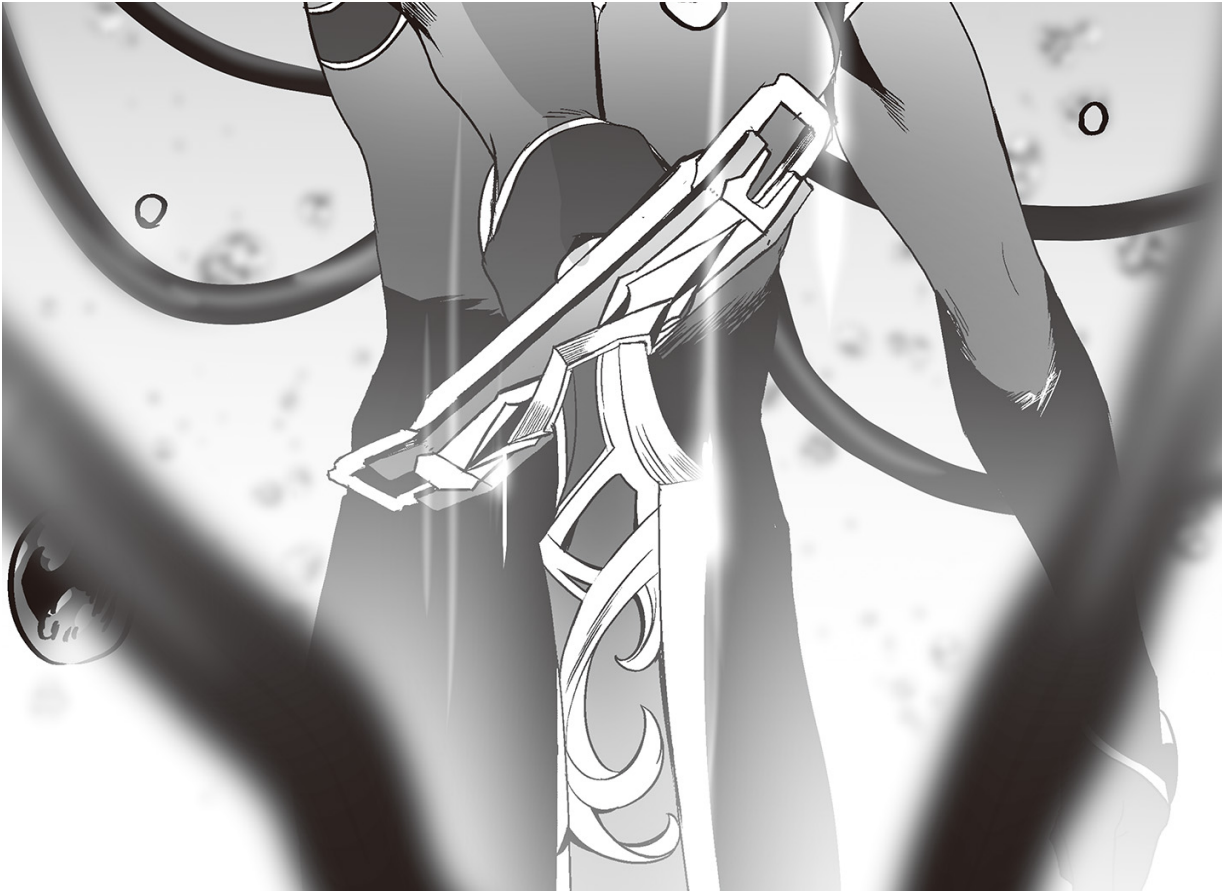
「—GU, GYAAAAAaAAAA!」

The explosion with power to even change the geography pierced through its core. The grotesque devil started breaking down.

No—apparently that body which was overdosed with Elixir had reached its limit.

However with this enemy with organic material that could be attacked with Drag-Ride didn't exist anymore in this place.





With only one exception—Fugil himself.

「.....」

「Thank you very much, Fugil. Your quick wit saved us.」

The Automata Arshalia spoke to her master from the cockpit.

The hero of beginning with Bahamut equipped was only looking down to the temple site with a cold gaze.

The jet black armor he was wearing was thick. It had changed to have sharp edge. Its appearance was radiating sinister omen.

Almost all of the people who had fought together with Lux were familiar with that form.

「—Over Limit, looks like he is really serious to decide the battle here.」

Uroboros had been rendered impervious against attack due to Endless, and Fugil possessed superhuman ability that came from Baptism in addition of the Over Limit.

These two's full power that obliterated even the Seven Dragon Paladins at that abandoned capital Guernica would be turned toward the remaining allied force in this place.

「—Why, are all of you fighting?」

Fugil suddenly muttered. The attention of everyone there was slightly turned toward him.

Right after that—Bahamut flew in the air with a speed that couldn't be followed by sight.

「—!?!」

Its aim was Krulcifer who was wearing Fafnir. Everyone there was surprised that he was intentionally aiming at her who was currently strengthened by her Full Connect state.

Was he intending to see just how outclassed they were? Or perhaps he judged her to be a powerful enemy that should be brought down first? Either way, this was just what Krulcifer herself wished for—.

(Wait? What is he planning—?You can't do any damage to Drag-Ride right now. Just what can he do to us then?)

The principle of the world was being altered right now due to Endless. It made the blue haired girl confused.

Even so she immediately chose to snipe the opponent with her Freezing Cannon.

But, Fugil only lifted up his armored arm in front of his face. The bullet dispersed disappointingly when it hit.

「Tsu.....!? Just as I thought!」

Everyone there had confirmed that attack to Drag-Ride wouldn't do anything.

However, Fugil used his armor to block Krulcifer's attack. It hinted that the attack would work if it was directed toward the pilot themselves.

In other words—even if they couldn't break Bahamut's armor, they could defeat Fugil who had been turned into a superhuman.

Though that was only if their attack could hit properly.

(Then—, it's convenient that he is coming toward me who can use Divine Raiment of future prediction! If I can freeze his body, we'll have a chance to win.)

Krulcifer immediately thought that and decided to move into close-quarter combat.

「Get back, Krulcifer!」

But, she heard Lisha's angry yell from behind and she returned to her senses.

「——」

Come to think of it, what would happen to me if I get injured in this battle?
The girl thought.

Due to Full Connect, her body and a part of the Drag-Ride were fused into one.

Would her body part that was fused be considered as Drag-Ride too and obtained absolute defense?

No—, Krulcifer guessed the answer from her instinct.

With her body fused with the Drag-Ride, she would take over around half of the damage of her Drag-Ride.

That was why Fugil was aiming for Krulcifer first.

「—There is no chance of victory for all of you from the very beginning. No, you will obtain nothing even if you win.」

Fafnir's special armament, the automatic defense Auto Shield moved to block Fugil's slash.

However, they didn't make it in time. The slash of Quick Draw that Fugil unleashed was faster than the automatic defense's movement. It swung down on Krulcifer's shoulder.

「Tsu.....!」

Impact—.

If only the Auto Shield made it in time, with the principle alteration of Endless right now, Drag-Ride's attack wouldn't work toward inorganic material—it would create a perfect defense.

But, Krulcifer was hit with an attack that was filled with more than enough power. The attack came faster than the deployment of her shields even though it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call their movement as instantaneous. She understood from this.

(The Over Limit and the secret techniques of Drag-Ride piloting—they are created for this kind of situation!?)

Why did Fugil learn the special techniques for piloting Drag-Ride even though he already had an unrivalled Divine Drag-Ride?

It was so he could obtain the battle strength that could surpass his opponent even in a situation where Uroboros's Divine Raiment sealed the abilities of both sides.

In addition—Fugil had obtained superhuman five senses and endurance due to his frequent Baptism. Even the burden of Over Limit to the pilot was something that didn't bother him.

The situation was overwhelmingly disadvantageous for the allied force.

The advantage that the allied force had built using their teamwork and combination of Divine Raiment was overturned when the battle was brought into a pure battle of skill.

(Even the prediction of Wise Blood isn't working. Then, at the very least!)

Krulcifer attempted a last ditch effort by shooting normal bullets focused on one point.

—But, even that effort was blocked by the Chaos Brand that Fugil swung down just now. It came to naught.

「So that's how it is—? If Drag-Ride's attack and ability won't work to inorganic material then-」

By simply using armor and sword as shield, they would turn into impregnable defense.

Furthermore—Krulcifer's body couldn't go on anymore.

She heard the sound of her shoulder bone breaking before falling below.

Strength left her body and Fafnir's armor was removed.

「Krulcifer!」

Lisha yelled. Alma flew with her EX Wyvern at the same time and caught Krulcifer.

Instantly, a dagger that Fugil threw tore into Alma's shoulder.

「U-ah.....!」

Alma's face distorted from the intense pain. Even so she didn't let go of Krulcifer's body.

It was the very least Alma could do to show her willpower as someone whose skill couldn't keep up with the battle anymore.

「This man named Fugil.....! He is unbelievable!」

Lisha gritted her teeth while aiming Sevens Heads at Fugil.

Alma turned off the barrier of her Drag-Ride in order to catch Krulcifer. Fugil didn't miss that moment and threw a dagger toward Alma's flesh body that was slightly visible through the gap.

From the start he had intended to attack Krulcifer's comrade who came to save her.

A single act of Fugil was connecting further to the next move to corner his enemies.

Anyone watching would first be struck with admiration by that performance before feeling angry that their comrade was wounded.

This was—the skill of the Drag-Knight who had continued fighting for more than a thousand years.

Then—Lisha calmed her breathing and fired up herself.

She would hold back—no, defeat Fugil before Lux returned to the front line.

If she used Tiamat's projectile weapon that had wide range as well as high power, even if she couldn't damage the armor, it would be possible to deal lethal damage to Fugil's flesh body.

「—It's pointless. The conflict won't stop even after you stopped the Sacred Eclipse. Because human's, living creature's instinct is driving them to unfairness. Human cannot control their own desire, unless they're god.」

Fugil flew forward in his Bahamut while speaking his words with an indifferent tone.

He spoke with a volume as though he was talking to himself. But for some reason his voice felt clearly audible even within this blizzard.

Lisha listened to his words even while keeping her focus.

She fixed her aim carefully so that she wouldn't miss the moment Fugil's movement stopped. And just when she was about to attack,

.

GO-!

.

A shockwave was suddenly unleashed. Lisha and everyone else who were in the area got blown away.

「Gah.....!」

Yells that she couldn't identify who the owners were echoed simultaneously.

She could feel nothing except overwhelming pressure running through her whole body. She stopped breathing due to the pain.

After a bit of time passed, she noticed that the shockwave came from the Howling Roar that was unleashed by Uroboros's main body behind Fugil—but it was too late.

The shockwave penetrated the barriers of the Drag-Rides that Lisha and others were wearing. The impact ran through their flesh body.

They didn't die instantly from the impact, but the pain felt as though their body just got slammed on the ground. Their consciousness was almost cut off.

Looking carefully, Fugil had strengthened his barrier and took defensive posture just a moment before the attack came so he didn't get hit by it, and yet they didn't notice it.

「Uh, gu.....!」

Uroboros dashed forward using that opening and brandished its large blade.

Direct attack that came from Drag-Ride shouldn't work except against flesh body, but the low temperature of the weather was freezing the blade's surface slightly.

Therefore some damage would still go through to the target it attacked.

Uroboros rushed straight toward Airi who was wearing Jormungandr and took the stance to slash down.

「—Airi! Run!」

「—!?!」

An unavoidable threat was approaching before her eyes.

Airi still hadn't learned any technique to protect herself by controlling Jormungandr.

「—Stop!」

「Stop it!」

Greifer and Mel forced their way through from left and right simultaneously.

In the current situation when Photon Dive's invincibility was rendered invalid by Endless, Greifer didn't have any other way to stop the attack except using his armor's own mass but—.

ZUGAAAAAA-!

A roaring sound like a thunder howled and the gigantic Blade was swung down like a falling meteor.

The two who stood in the way as Airi's wall managed to shift the trajectory of the large blade slightly, but they were blown away just from the wind pressure and crashed on the snow covered ground.

「.....tsu!」

Naturally, Airi was prepared to die when the sure kill attack hit her but—. Rosa's Gorynych ran in front of her and barely blocked the attack from hitting her.

「Rosa-san!」

「.....Tsu! Its power is greater than I thoughtt. But, I won't be able to face Lux-sama if I let you die.....」

Cough Rosa coughed out blood and her Drag-Ride was dispelled.

With just one attack, three elite Drag-Knights wearing Divine Drag-Rides were taken down. Airi also reached the limit of her stamina and Jormungandr was dispelled.

「.....Charging finished. Firing the main cannon.」

Howling Roar, the slash of the gigantic Blade.

The allied force had received tremendous damage just from that. But the threat didn't stop coming.

The flying Uroboros was striking while descending at the same time. Right after that—Arshalia activated the main cannon and aimed at Lisha.

「—Shit. There is, there is this much difference between us!?!」

「Even if your group is in perfect condition right now, you all still won't be a match against Fugil. He had gone through hell many times and survived until now. For the sake of protecting mankind's future. He has fought for eternity. He won't lose.」

Arshalia spoke her verdict with a robotic tone and mercilessly fired her attack.

In the next moment, the temple site was enveloped in a blinding flash.

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Part 26

While Arshalia was launching a concentrated attack against Airi—the other Drag-Knights naturally weren't just standing still.

Soffice, Philuffy, and Yoruka were fighting to stop the opponent's fierce attack.

However, because Arshalia herself was an Automata, their attack on Uroboros didn't work at all.

Seeing that they targeted Fugil who was within their attack range, but their aim had been predicted.

Dodo-! Pile Anchors were launched in succession toward Fugil's flesh body, but they were all deflected with his great sword or dodged.

Soffice used that opening to attack with Vritra's Blade.

「The ideal that no one can achieve and lie abandoned. I have to continue fighting in order to accomplish my mission as hero. All of you have no power to cut open the path to the future.」

「—Ku!」

Soffice was exhausted. She couldn't catch up with the speed of Bahamut that was in Over Limit state.

Just when she barely entered the firing range, a terrifying chill ran through her back.

Her attack pattern was already seen through just from crossing swords several times.

Fugil had grasped her preliminary movement and severed the starting point of her attack with a slash.

That was to say, Fugil used Critical Hit and rained down consecutive attacks on Soffice from above her armor with his great sword.

「A, gu.....!」

Vritra itself wasn't getting damaged due to Endless's principle alteration. But, the sword's power that struck on her flesh body through the barrier was a different matter.

She received impacts as though she had fallen from several floors high. It felt like her consciousness would fly away.

Even so—Soffice gritted her teeth and endured.

「Do you intend.....to stick to your determination with that? That's, not right..... You, should know already. That what you wished for, will never return like before.」

Soffice was free-falling together with Vritra while mustering her last strength to activate her Divine Raiment.

「That Sacred Eclipse, is wrong. It's broken. Even so—you decide that you have no other recourse except clinging on it. You are running away into the dream you lost, without even listening to us.」

Fugil didn't even pay any attention to Soffice's muttering.

But, he should have heard her words.

「—Mahaprana!」

And then, she unleashed her last strength as though to express all her feelings.

But, Fugil only blinked slightly and didn't even put up his guard.

Due to the power of Endless, Divine Raiment's influence on inorganic material was erased. He had no need to defend.

Even so, Fugil's sight was blocked just for instant by leaves. He felt something was out of place and stopped moving.

「—?」

His question was answered right away, but Soffice's plan was already bearing fruit at that time.

「—Vajra!」

Pop There was a small sound, then right after that, flash blinked from above.

The special armament in the form of satellite weapon, Vajra sent lightning toward Fugil.

It was Soffice's last plan.

The plan was how to use Vritra's special armament—Vajra that was floating in the sky so that its lightning could hit Fugil.

In this Ancient Forest that was under the influence of Endless, the trajectory of inorganic material couldn't be manipulated.

So Soffice used her trajectory manipulation on the live leaves around her. She heaved them up to blind Fugil and succeeded in making him stop moving.

Fugil's flesh body would be damaged if he was bathed in lightning.

She used her Divine Raiment to prepare that.

「Your weak point, is being too powerful in everything..... You are convinced that you can do anything, that's why your life can only revolve around that strength. —Just like me before.」

If it was only a lightning strike, it would be possible to erase it with Zero One. But Fugil's reaction was delayed because his sight was blocked.

And so Fugil stayed in place and received Vajra's lightning strike fully.

『——Fugil!』

The Automata Arshalia sensed Fugil's predicament and yelled, but Fugil was unperturbed even now after receiving that attack.

He took a stance that hardened his defense. He only needed to wait several seconds until the numbness in his body was gone.

「I leave——the rest to you. Lux, everyone.」

Soffice had used up all her strength and her armor was dispelled. She was falling from the sky.

Philuffy and Yoruka didn't miss that chance and flew toward Fugil.

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Part 27

『——Ku!』

Around 200 ml east from Fugil's location, Arshalia was in agony.

As an Automata, she was protected by Endless's effect and nothing could harm her.

But Fugil was taken by surprise because of that.

Urorboros's Divine Raiment that changed even the world's principle was too powerful that Fugil himself fell under its effect. Even Zero One and Reload on Fire were turned ineffective.

Arshalia also had a choice to dispel Endless with her own judgment but——.

(I believe in you, Fugil. You won't lose even if you are in disadvantage.)

Arshalia had seen it many times——on countless occasions. She had recorded them all.

Of his fight that was continuing even now after more than a thousand years.

Of his figure that was never defeated, his figure that never gave up.

(An Automata like me cannot become the replacement of the real Arshalia.)

However——, she didn't think that her existence as a machine to grant her master's wish was mistaken.

(Then!)

She would give her all to exterminate the enemies in front of her as quickly as possible.

Arshalia resolved herself so and turned toward the remaining members of the allied force.

「You have prepared yourself haven't you?」

There was practically no one who was wearing Drag-Ride anymore within the allied force.

Airi, Mel, Greifer, Rosa, Soffice, Alma, the Triad. All of them already lost consciousness. Lisha was the only one who was somehow keeping herself standing.

However, even her current situation could be counted as a good showing considering she was facing Uroboros with her defense and offense using Divine Raiment sealed.

Aeril was forcing herself to collect those who were defeated with difficulty. She hid them together with Magialca and Lolotte behind the cover of the crumbling temple but—.

「I should be the one asking you that. You haven't dispelled Endless even though your master might get defeated—. Are you a servant planning to use your own master as shield to survive?」

「.....」

Lisha was breathing hard while using Wyvern Wing form to continue avoiding Arshalia's attack and provoking her.

Using that overwhelming mobility from the Over Unit's enhancement, she managed to somehow dodge Uroboros's attack although she couldn't do anything else.

Lisha was also already burning her internal energy using the power of Baptism, even so she wouldn't be able to hold for long.

But, right now she was intentionally persisting to buy time. The time for Arshalia to make her decision was approaching.

Even if she wasn't a human but an Automata, all the Automatas possessed a heart.

Lisha was staking her everything in her plan to make use of that fact.

「I won't dispel Endless. I believe in Fugil. He is the successor of master who created me.....the real Arshalia——」

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Part 28

In the meanwhile, Fugil who was dropping after being hit by Vajra's lightning strike was under a fierce assault by Philuffy and Yoruka.

Against Bahamut in Over Limit state, not even the two of them would be able to stand against Fugil.

However right now the lightning strike was transmitted through Fugil's armor and paralyzed his body.

The two girls gave their all to attack Fugil using this opening where his control of his Drag-Ride was dulling.

Both Yoruka and Philuffy were already at their limit stamina wise.

But, their will power maintained their thick armors and their determination moved them.

It wouldn't be long before Lux recovered and came here.

Because of that, they poured their whole soul in order to inflict damage to Fugil even for just a little more.

「.....」

However, even after getting fully hit by a lightning strike that would make the average human seriously wounded—or unconscious at the very least, Fugil showed no agitation at all.

He was simply controlling Bahamut with his paralyzed body that couldn't move well to accurately defend, while his eyes were accurately seeing through his opponent's actions.

He was executing his mission cool-headedly like a machine.

The two girls increased their momentum further so that they wouldn't be overpowered by that force of will.

「—He is really headstrong. The same like Aruji-sama.」

「But..... If it's Lu-chan, he will listen, to our story.」

Typhon's powerful arm guarded against Fugil's great sword and deflected it away before its fist struck through the barrier.

The consecutive attacks from End Action that Yoruka unleashed were coming from behind with a roar so that he couldn't escape.

Most likely Fugil would recover with a few more seconds. The two were giving everything they had to deal a decisive damage before that. Then their ears—heard a voice that resounded through the area.

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【—All principles shall return to before the alteration.】

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「—!？」

At the snowfield of Ancient Forest—tension ran through the expression of Yoruka and Philuffy who were attacking Fugil from two directions.

They thought that perhaps the Automata controlling Uroboros's main body had dispelled Endless, but that wasn't it.

The energy was exhausted and hit rock bottom after Fguil used Endless to adopt one principle continuously without pause.

However even that was within Fugil calculation.

He was already aware that Endless would cut off in the middle of this battle and started moving in that opening.

「You two are quite capable. However it's pointless.」

The instant Yoruka and Philuffy's attention was slightly distracted, crimson light surged from Fugil's armor.

Instantly it looked like the time of the surrounding area was halted. The scattered snows stopped falling.

「——Reload on Fire」

Fugil used the Divine Raiment not on himself, but on the time of the surrounding space, stopping Philuffy and Yoruka's movement.

It was the technique that Lux named Violent Strike, a technique that rained consecutive blows on the opponent while their movement was drastically slowed.

Fugil's body rotated lightly along with his Drag-Ride. His great blade slashed horizontally, breaking Typhon and Yato no Kami's armored arms, damaging the Force Core.

「.....!」

「He, got us.」

The two's Divine Drag-Rides were dispelled after their energy sources were hit.

Philuffy and Yoruka's battle ended here.

「Fugil——!」

And then, now.

In that instant when Philuffy and Yoruka were taken down by Fugil's Violent Strike.

Lux was rushing toward Fugil with a speed that couldn't be followed by eyes.

He himself was also taking off all the restrictions and used Over Limit. He closed the distance toward Fugil who had unleashed his Divine Raiment just now.

「Aruji, sama.....」

「Lu, chan.....」

Lux was filled with feeling of gratitude toward the two girls who desperately fought till the end.

No—the feeling inside himself couldn't possibly be expressed as just gratitude.

He couldn't measure just how much they had done for him and protected him.

He couldn't die until this feeling of his reached them.

That feeling—that strength of heart granted him the sharpness in his control of Drag-Ride.

GAUN-!

He charged toward Fugil who was also in Over Limit. He pushed up from the ground to the sky with overwhelming propulsive power without breaking.

Lux executed his secret technique the instant Fugil's posture slightly broke due to the shockwave.

「—End Action!」

He poured his concentration power that was strengthened by Baptism to execute a new type of End Action.

He piled up slashes from every direction to crush every method of attack of the enemy while focusing the damage he dealt to destroy a single point.

The single point that he targeted was the Force Core of Fugil's Bahamut.

It was like the end point of a torrential rain, storm, or waterfall.

Those slashes were so fast, many, and endless that there was no metaphor that could be used to describe it. They shredded the opponent's armor.

Fugil's battle had ended.

It had ended since more than one thousand years ago.

The dream of world peace that he was aiming for together with Arshalia—the Sacred Eclipse that she should have completed, they were already lost.

It was nobody else but the memory of Arshalia herself that was stored as AI who told them that.

That was why, Lux resolved himself to fight Fugil.

In order to not let him repeated the undesired battles even more than this, in order to stop his mission as hero—.

「—What's wrong, my wise younger brother? Is that all you've got?」

The slashes of End Action were breaking the armor of Fugil's Bahamut.

Even so, Fugil's defensive movement never faltered.

He accurately predicted every single one of Lux's consecutive attacks that were coming like surging waves to defend against lethal damage while waiting for an opening to counterattack.

He was preventing any damage to accumulate toward his Force Core.

The sounds of impact were intense.

Fugil was laughing within the situation where both sides shouldn't be able to hear each other.

There is no way to proof such thing. No one can understand whether Fugil's action is pointless or not.

Fugil's gaze—his sword handling that didn't falter at the slightest even under this tremendous attacks were saying that.

「For me, the hero's mission is to carry out justice. To use that imperfect Sacred Eclipse and bring balance to the world, that's all. I will simply save the weak, guide them, and finish a vessel of the righteous king.」

There was the figure of the immortal who had continued fighting for more than a thousand years after overcoming every kind of rejection and despair over there.

「—This, damn blockhead!」

Lux yelled from his heart and continued to unleash End Action.

He—Fugil was pigheaded.

He was a man who would stick to what he had decided no matter what.

He was a person who wouldn't accept losing no matter what happened and continued to fight.

He was a big brother that resembled Lux somewhat.

That was exactly why he understood.

That Fugil was already broken, and that he himself hadn't noticed that fact.

The system of Arshalia's AI that was hidden in Garden's treasure warehouse was something that should have been inherited by Avalon's Automata. That was what Arshalia's pseudo personality said.

Arshalia hadn't finished the system adjustment for reviving the pseudo personality. She left the task of completing the program to the Garden's Automata and went asleep.

Time was needed to complete the program in order to tell Fugil about the truth of the past clearly.

But in the middle of that the Garden met the same incident like the Ark. The clan of traitor broke into Garden to obtain the technology and legacy there and the goal of telling Fugil the truth got suspended.

Accidents were piling up repeatedly and became a tragedy. Arshalia became unable to convey the truth to him.

Fugil wouldn't stop anymore.

However—Lux swore he would stop him.

In order to put an end to the hero's mission that continued for eternity.

In order to convey to him of what he learned from the people of this era—.

.

【—All attacks will be reflected back to the one who dealt them with twice the power】

.

「—!？」

Uroboros's Divine Raiment—Endless activated. The Ancient Forest was enveloped in faint light of seven colors.

The instant the voice resounded directly inside his brain, Lux also discerned Fugil's intention and stopped his endless attacks.

Because he understood that he would be defeated in less than several seconds if the power that he struck the opponent with was reflected twice

over back to him.

He had no other choice but to stop even knowing that was the enemy's aim.

「In the end your resistance is only that much.」

Instantly, the slash of Quick Draw that Fugil sent out created a crack on Lux's shoulder armor.

But Fugil himself was also still damaged from Lux's attack just now, in addition he was also careful so that he wouldn't receive the reflected damage, so the attack's strength was low.

Even so, the impact reverberated until Lux's flesh body. Lux's Bahamut got its output lowered and it descended.

「Gu-u.....!」

Fugil hovered in place from the damages that he received until now, while Lux was falling from the attack he received.

The chance of victory that only came once of a lifetime was blocked by Uroboros just as expected.

It could change the world's principle freely, on top of that it was able to fight separately.

In addition it had also stopped fighting while conserving energy to be used for the next world alteration.

「Come, Arshalia! Take in the central and regain Uroboros's original form.....!」

『Is that alright Fugil? If we use that, we won't be able to use world revision for several years——』

Arshalia answered using Dragon Voice from 200 ml away. She was objecting at first, but she realized that it was a foolish question midway.

Lisha was still fighting persistently against Uroboros. She recognized her and Lux as formidable enemies that they had never seen before and understood Fugil's intention to show them the respect they deserved.

That was—.

『They have to die here. Then—I'll begin.』

Arshalia connected her electronic brain with Avalon as the Gear Leader and activated the system.

Right after that, the ground shook and the world was covered with faint light.

「Over Limit—On」

Fugil turned toward Uroboros's chest almost at the same time with that voice and they combined.

He then lifted up his Sword Device, a huge silver facility surfaced up from underground the temple site—it was the central. It disassembled and changed shape.

「Don't tell me—no way! Uroboros itself has an Over Limit Mode!?!」

The central of Avalon was the other half of the zeroth Ruin, Avalon.

Therefore the theory that it could combine using Over Limit, such possibility had crossed Lux's mind but—he intentionally didn't try to think deeper about it.

After all they were already in overwhelming disadvantage. They would have no chance of victory either way if the enemy did something like that.

「How can this be possible, the enemy still has a trump card like this.....!」

Behind Aeryl who was protecting everyone behind the cover of the temple site, Mel wearing pilot suit had recovered her consciousness and muttered

with a dumbfounded look.

「Damn, bastard..... Just how many powers he is keeping around.....!」

The heavily wounded Greifer who was also in his pilot suit also turned his gaze powerlessly toward that sight.

「I can only laugh after it get to this pointt」

「Perhaps it's already hopeless..... For us」

Rosa smiled bitterly. Beside her Soffice also looked up to the sky in resignation.

Some distance away from them, Krulcifer, Philuffy, Celis, Yoruka, and Alma were also watching the development wordlessly.

They were also wounded all over and couldn't move right away.

Lisha who was the only one who could fight readied her Sevens Heads. She was trying to stop the combination.

But—she couldn't fire.

If she attacked, the attack reflection by Endless would hit Lisha with double the damage. She would definitely die no matter how much Tiamat hardened its defense.

She also couldn't use Suppressor due to the same reason.

Furthermore weak attack wouldn't do any harm toward that giant Artifact.

Fugil activated Uroboros's Over Limit after taking this condition into his calculation.

Could she attack even knowing that she would surely die—?

Could she do anything that would take her life as the price as the princess who would shoulder the new kingdom after this?

Lisha's body shook from the tension. Sweat trickled down from her forehead. Meanwhile.

『Fugil—please listen. If you are still fighting—』

「……………」

Fugil heard a voice from Uroboros that he was currently combining with.

It was the voice of the AI that was sleeping in the Garden, the program that Arshalia left behind more than a thousand years ago.

It was set up so that in the unlikely event that Uroboros was taking in the central, the AI Arshalia would talk directly to Fugil—.

Aeril who was contracted with the central had set up this program beforehand.

『—Fugil. Listen to me, your battle is already over.』

『……………』

Fugil allowed only the Dragon Voice from Lux to connect to him, and yet he didn't even reply back.

But the voice—Lux's voice that was filled with exhaustion definitely reached his ears.

『We have learned about it. The record that was hidden in the Garden's treasure warehouse—it told us what happened in your past, and what path you chose at the end of it.』

『……………』

『We also have heard directly from Arshalia, how that Sacred Eclipse is a failed creation.』

『……………』

Fugil didn't reply.

He was listening.

He also understood the meaning of Lux's words.

Even so, his body was simply focusing on the battle before him.

『Before she died, Arshalia hid it from you. She was scared to tell you the truth. If the central and Uroboros is connected into one—you should be able to hear about the truth of that time from the mouth of her AI!』

The next time Lux and Fugil clashed.

No matter who won, the battle would be decided. Lux understood that.

That was why, he needed to tell Fugil while there was still time now.

The fact that even Fugil didn't know. What happened more than a thousand years ago—.

.

Part 29

『The Sacred Eclipse that I created——was a failure.』

A few hours ago——.

Lux together with Airi and Aeryl were inside the central.

The AI Arshalia that was revived using the data chip formed her words with hesitation.

「A failure? Because you were made to remodel it by a faction of the clan of traitor who killed you? That's why that Sacred Eclipse not only work for the salvation of mankind, but also respond to human's malice and carry out slaughter——」

Aeryl asked with a doubtful look. In respond Arshalia's projected image shook her head.

『No. That's not what I mean. From the beginning the Sacred Eclipse didn't work as I envisioned.』

「.....」

Lux and Airi stayed silent even while they were feeling baffled.

They simply waited quietly for the truth to be spoken from the girl's mouth.

『The Sacred Eclipse would react to people's thought and acted. It would defeat what the great majority thought as evil while at the same time giving salvation to weak people who met misfortune. I planned the Sacred Eclipse to be such device. But, the people were scared. They feared me and Fugil from the bottom of their heart. They perceived us as a threat.』

「.....」

『We wanted to save them. However—while the people were feeling grateful to us, they were also praying in their heart for us to vanish at the same time. That was the thought of the people in that era.』

The three were unable to understand the meaning of Arshalia's words at first.

However, after a brief pause, Airi, Aeril, and Lux realized.

The empire and the clan of traitor.

The ruling side and the ruled side.

Fugil and Arshalia didn't belong to either of those sides. They were fighting for the sake of peace. And so they were shunned by both sides.

『The two of us kept getting in the way of their desires. The desire to rule and exploit the people. The desire to take revenge to those who oppress them. Those two desires are something that only natural for human to possess. However, we didn't notice just how great their desire for the Ruins' power were.』

Fugil who was injected with Elixir in the amount that shouldn't be possible for a normal human to endure was the strongest Drag-Knight who turned immortal.

People revered him because of his immense strength, at the same time the people were also scared of him as someone that they mustn't oppose.

Arshalia was the goddess of salvation who could make great use of the Ruins more than anybody using her genius.

The people felt gratitude for her benevolence—at the same time, the common mass who had lived under oppression for a long time and had many things taken away from them were also accumulating jealousy inside their heart.

Jealousy toward Arshalia's intelligence and her imperial princess status.

They were convinced that everything she had was because of her talent and fortune. They wished from the bottom of her heart to take those blessings for themselves.

『The people's hearts—aren't made up with only righteous things. No, our thinking that everyone agrees with our thought, it was arrogant of us.』

「.....」

Lux remembered.

The distorted hearts of the people who were exploited and hurt.

The figures of the common mass who ignored her mother who was dying from carriage accident and even threw stones toward him who was but a kid.

But even those people—surely didn't seriously think that Lux was someone who caused the evil deeds that befell them when he was still just a kid at that time.

Even so, when the chance to take revenge came for them, they couldn't help but to take it.

Right now—he understood their feeling.

People.....when they lost their human heart would become a mere animal.

They would lose their human heart when they lost something and despaired. They would also lose their human heart when they were given too many benefits and lost all restraints.

The hearts of all the people in Arcadia Empire a thousand years ago were too close of being a beast.

That was something that couldn't be changed.

It was only extremely natural for them to envy someone who never tasted failure even once.

And then—the prototype of Sacred Eclipse detected that fact and perceived it.

That the target who the people of the world wished to erase 『if only he just disappear』 , was Fugil Arcadia.

The man who Arshalia believed as the hero.

『My thought fell into chaos at that time. I thought that something like this is wrong. Fugil fought for peace and sacrificed himself for it more than anyone. But to think that people would actually shun him like that. I adjusted the telepathy system of the Sacred Eclipse. However—no matter what I did, they system that we devised at that time kept designating us as the villain. As long as the system kept reflecting the will of the people, it would judge Fugil as an unneeded existence forever.』

「.....」

An absolutely powerful warrior.

An immortal existence.

The people who knew about Fugil's existence rejected an absolute existence like him.

What if by some chance Fugil went crazy?

What if someone offended him even if only by accident? Wouldn't they get killed? The common mass held such fear. It distorted the thought objective of the Sacred Eclipse.

「Then, the one who rewrote the system of Sacred Eclipse was——」

The projection of Arshalia nodded at Lux's question.

In the past more than a thousand years ago, Arshalia met the rebellion of the clan of traitor and got killed.

However, how could those rebels rewrite the system of Sacred Eclipse?

It was only that part of the story that felt somewhat strange.

『Yes, it was me. The members of clan of traitor who I spared—I was remaking the Sacred Eclipse before they attacked me. It will bring salvation to the people and grant their wish. On the other hand it will also react to strong hostility and malice. It will destroy the targets and turned them as its source of energy. I remade the Sacred Eclipse to also has such aspect as biological weapon that bring about slaughter.』

「Why, did you—no」

Aeril realized in the middle of her whisper.

「Was it to, set up Fugil as the hero.....」

The projection nodded weakly.

『Originally, I only planned to order it to act like a rampaging Abyss that isn't related to both me and Fugil. I would make it do so just once before its completion. Then I would order Fugil to take it down without him knowing about the truth. I wished to show his figure saving the world to the people so they know that he is a hero.』

A farce, a drama, it didn't matter what it was called.

The point was that Arshalia wanted to make it a common knowledge in the hearts of the people.

How Fugil was fighting in order to save the world and the people.

That his power would be necessary from here on too.

She planned to guide the public opinion so that people's awareness would change. So that the Sacred Eclipse that reflected the combined thought of

the people wouldn't designate Fugil as an enemy.

In order to achieve that, she even thought that she wouldn't mind even if a little part of the rebel army from the clan of traitor got sacrificed.

After all, Fugil had saved them many times before.

「However, that's——.....」

『Yes, it was my mistake. They wouldn't let go of their hatred no matter how much time passed and kept causing conflicts. Without me realizing it, I had come to despise them deep inside my heart.』

Arshalia constantly wished for peace and treated the people with kindness. But the endless conflicts made her exhausted in the end and so she chose such an option.

.

『I was——』

.

And then——now.

The AI Arshalia told Fugil who was in the process of connecting to the central from inside Uroborors.

『I was, unable to become the goddess of salvation.』

That voice, was filled with the despair of the girl who had her eyes set on the end of the world.

The girl who discovered her ideal in the middle of endless wars of a broken era.

She finally exposed her true feelings as someone who failed to make her dream come true.

『I, wished to change that distorted world. Fighting together with you Fugil, I thought I was able to change the people's hearts little by little.』

Her voice contained loneliness within it, but also happiness.

The girl reminisced about her success and failure.

『However, I was unable—to become a god like the people who praised me wished to. No matter how far I went, in the end I was nothing but a human. I first realized that when I was scared after learning that the people felt hatred and contempt at you Fugil.』

Arshalia too was also a human, one who was dyed with ego.

She would also fight so that what was important for her wouldn't be taken away from her.

『The hero and the goddess』 .

No matter how great their achievements were, they were still human.

What they tried to shoulder was too heavy of a burden for them.

「.....」

Fugil said nothing hearing those words.

There wasn't any twitch in his expression.

He was simply focusing his hearing toward the voice of the AI.

『That Sacred Eclipse was something that I remodeled for Fugil to subdue. Its purpose is different from its original function. Fugil, you must be trying to fulfill your promise with me—without knowing about that.』

「.....」

Even if it was a defective device of salvation, he would use it because it was something that Arshalia left behind. Fugil who was left behind by

himself would continue to fight together with the Sacred Eclipse.

It was for the sake of fulfilling his mission as the ally of the weak—as the hero, to realize a world without any conflict at all, to continue keeping the balance.

He believed that doing so would be for the continuation of their dream.

.

Arshalia told Lux and others that truth a few hours ago and requested them.

『That's why—please stop Fugil. Please let him return from being a hero into just a human. I know that what I'm asking is selfish but—please, I'm begging you.』

And then, Lux and others challenged Fugil to a battle.

In order to succeed Arshalia's dying wish and ended all the battles—.

.

Part 30

And then, at the present time. In the air above the temple site within the Ancient Forest.

Lisha roared in front of Uroboros that used Over Limit and was currently transforming.

『What the hell I'm thinking right now!』

She took a deep breath and fired up herself again.

She turned toward the spherical facility—the central that was currently disassembling and combining. She raised her Sevens Heads and took aim.

『Ane-ue.....? What are you doing!?!』

Alma who was watching the battle used Dragon Voice and raised her voice to Lisha in panic.

No, everyone who was fighting there was watching that sight while doubting their eyes.

As expected the process of the Over Limit would still take some time until its completion due to the frame's size that was too big.

Judging from what their eyes were seeing, the process would take more than a minute—but it didn't look like it would take as long as several minutes.

「To hell with it all. Right now I'm fighting with everyone's help. What's more there is something that I can do in order to defeat Fugil. There isn't any need to hesitate at all if it's for opening a path to victory for him!」

That was the cry of the soul that came from inside Lisha herself.

The reality where she would certainly die.

She tore apart that absolutely despairing shackle with her own will.

「——Stop! If the damage from that attack gets reflected back to you, you're going to die for sure you know!?!」

Some distance away from the temple site where Lisha was at, at the other side of the transforming Uroboros, inside the west side of the forest, Krulcifer yelled that with her raw voice when she saw Lisha charging her Seven Heads.

She didn't know whether her voice would reach Lisha or not.

However, she couldn't hold back herself from yelling.

As her friend who had spent time together in the academy until now, interacting with her, fighting together, and sometimes quarreling with each other as love rival, she had to stop her.

「.....The princess, she is serious.」

Philuffy appeared from behind a nearby tree and talked to Krulcifer.

She was also holding her Sword Device and focused on it to summon Typhon once more, but it seemed she hadn't succeeded yet.

Just from looking at that, Krulcifer understood how Philuffy was feeling right now.

Lisha was going to do what she could right now for Lux's sake——she felt vexed that she couldn't stop her from doing that.

Fafnir didn't have the firepower to stop Uroboros's transformation, but Krulcifer too would surely do the same like Lisha if she was able to.

Even so——she didn't know if it would do anything.

Everyone decided that they would fight this battle. Even if this was the only thing that could be done for a chance of victory—.

.

Part 31

—At that time, in the cockpit inside Uroboros's head.

There the Automata Arshalia was installing Fugil into Uroboros's chest while controlling its combination with the central. She too was staring intensely at the situation in front of her eyes in confusion.

「No way, it's impossible. Unlike us Automata, she will be beyond saving if her flesh body dies. She is also a princess, for her to do something like this—」

They activated Over Limit even though Lisha who could still fight was nearby because they had the protection from Endless's principle alteration.

.

【All attacks will be reflected back to the one who dealt them with twice the power】

.

Lisha would die if she attacked in full power under that effect. But she wouldn't be able to deal any damage if she only attacked using mere Cannon.

Besides—the Automata judged that Lisha had no reason to go as far as sacrificing her life in this battle.

Everyone was fighting for the sake of their own future—in order for themselves to be happy.

The destruction wouldn't arrive right away even if they failed to defeat Fugil.

Would someone really pour their soul until that much for the sake of their own conviction and justice?

「I have never seen any human like that even within all the repeated histories until now. Other than Fugil and Arshalia-sama who created me——」

The Automata believed that and focused into the transformation that would take dozens of seconds more till it finished.

.

「——Sevens Heads!」

.

However, Lisha fired. What's more it wasn't with the normal bombardment that dealt heat and impact.

What she fired was the purple orb created from Suppressor.

It was a lethal gravity sphere that would suck in everything it touched and crushed them.

It was filled with all of Lisha's remaining strength. It was truly the greatest attack she could make.

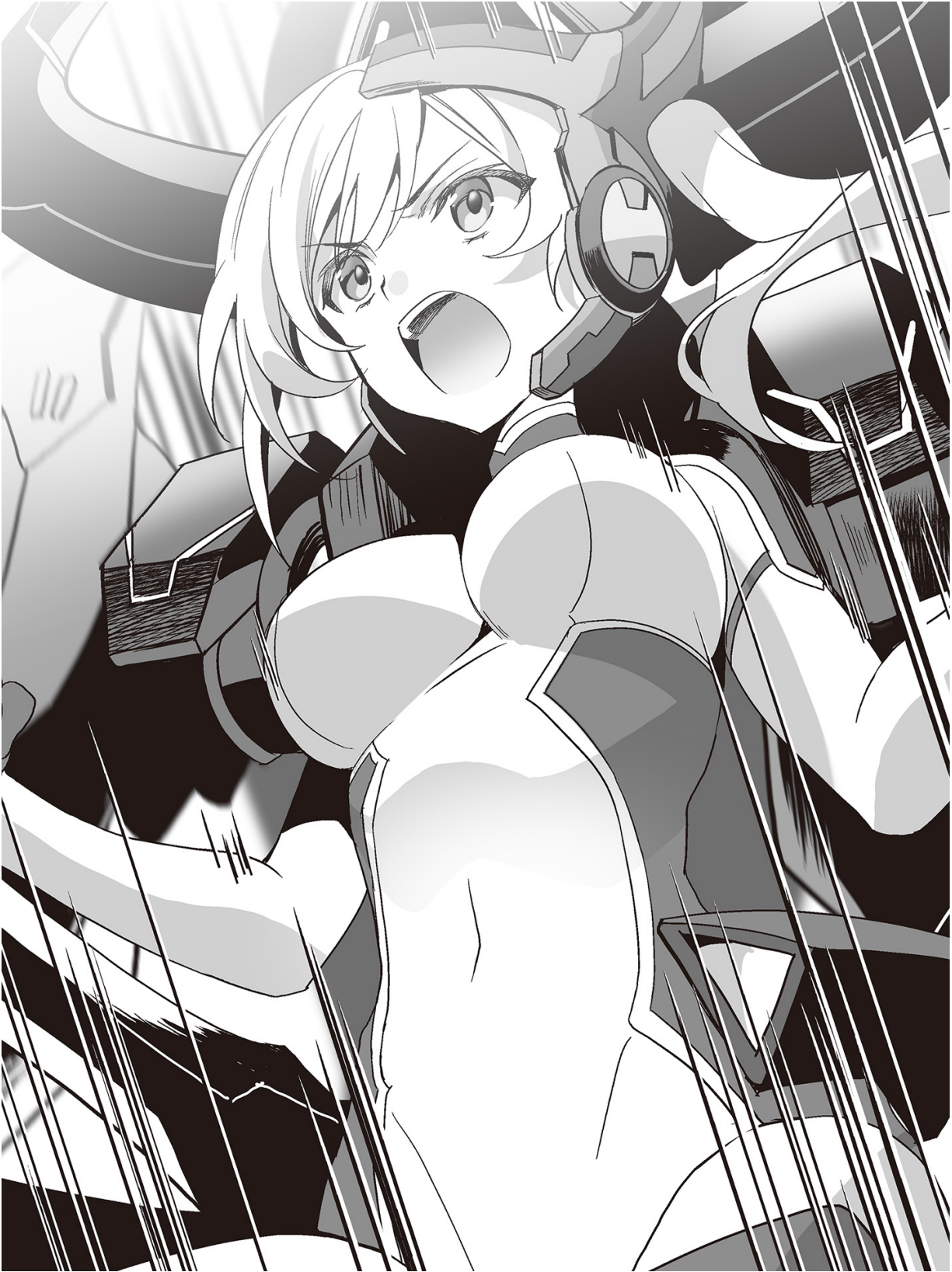
「——I'll leave the rest to you! Lux!」

Lisha yelled toward the person who she trusted the most.

Right after that, while the Automata Arshalia—and everyone in that place were watching with eyes widened in surprise, a jet black Divine Drag-Ride danced through the stormy sky.

.....*DOUUUNN!*





「—Reload on Fire!」

When the gravity orb hit the Uroboros that was transforming to its Over Limit form, the hardy metal frame was warped.

In that instant, Arshalia's projection that was persuading Fugil also vanished.

「Endless is—. The territory of the seven colored light is vanishing.....」

Airi in her pilot suit muttered with an astonished look from the cover of the temple site where she was hiding.

The internal armor of Uroboros was smashed by the gravity orb. It dealt damage to the Force Core, so it became unable to maintain its Divine Raiment's effect.

But, it was an effect that came after it received damage. It didn't mean that the damage reflection toward Lisha was rendered invalid because of that.

She might be squashed into paste along with Tiamat by the super gravity field.

Everyone was shaking in fear of that possibility. But in the middle of that, Lux appeared in the sky with Lisha in his arms. It seems her armor had been dispelled.

「—What. So you came. I was scared you know.....」

The members of the allied force who saw that understood what happened a bit later.

Lux's Bahamut that was in Over Limit form had used Reload on Fire. Its first five seconds of strengthening compression drastically reduced the gravity effect that Lisha received.

Because of that, it didn't matter even if the reflected damage was twice the original, the damage to Lisha could be reduced until nearly zero.

Lux instantly made that judgment, acted on it, and saved Lisha.

「Had she, calculated that from the start.....!? Such reckless action——」

The Automata Arshalia was dumbfounded within the cockpit of the half-destroyed Uroboros.

Lux and Lisha managed to choose the best action against Uroboros that was transforming into Over Limit form under the protection of Endless's principle alteration.

「No——that's not it.」

Fugil replied to the muttering of the Automata who couldn't hide her bafflement.

Just before the gravity orb hit, Fugil separated from Uroboros just barely in time and escaped from the attack in his Bahamut.

「Just before Uroboros was going to activate Over Limit, there wasn't any sign the two of them communicating with Dragon Voice.」

That meant——Lisha undoubtedly launched her attack with the resolve to die.

She did it not because of desperation, it also wasn't because she was being stubborn.

She was simply aware what was the best thing that she could do in her current state——. She judged that doing so was the only thing she could do to stop Uroboros's Over Limit in that situation. She weighed that option against her life and pushed forward courageously.

As a king, as a princess——.

There were very few people who could do such thing.

People who could die from following their belief blindly could be found anywhere. The number of people who spouted things like honor or dream

while launching suicide attack even though in their heart they thought that they didn't want to die also wasn't few in the battlefield.

There were also people who died because they were cornered with their path of escape cut off, thinking that there was no other way.

What Lisha did was none of them.

She stepped forward with her life on the line while also giving her all to grope for a path where she would be saved and survived.

And then—Lux sensed Lisha's predicament and gambled his all in a sink or swim bet to save her.

「.....」

After unraveling the bond between Lux and Lisha, the voice of the AI Arshalia that was talking to him was also cut off.

However Fugil's eyes were taken away by the sight before him rather than paying that any attention.

The trust between the two. Then the trusts of their comrades which supported that trust.

Seeing that scene made Fugil saw a vision for a few moments.

The scene that happened more than a thousand years ago between him and Arshalia.

The memory of their battle to change the world.

(Why, am I recalling such thing now? I—who am I?)

Uroboros was seriously damaged. The giant armor was falling to one knee.

Fugil who managed to evacuate ahead of the attack turned toward Lux and took a stance with his great sword.

—He could hear a voice.

It wasn't the voice of the projection that was created by the AI just now. It was the voice of Arshalia that was sleeping deep within Fugil's own consciousness.

.

『Hey Fugil. Are you listening? You and your family are called the clan of traitor but—. I think there is no one who is truly a bad person by nature.』

.

Her voice sounded joking and teasing.

The silver haired princess's dress fluttered.

At first he only snickered at her statement. He thought of her as a peace obsessed idiot princess who spouted nonsense in this ugly era of wars where everyone washed off blood with more blood.

—But, the girl was the real thing.

She was blessed with talent, she didn't shirk away from hard work, she didn't bend under the reality, she kept moving forward to reach her dream.

Moved by her zeal, Fugil too had chased after her dream before he realized it.

Arcadia imperial family and the rebelling clan of traitor, the two sides who were seized with desire and vengeance and caused ghastly disputes without end.

Behind those battles, the wretchedness of the animals called humans could be seen transparently.

He believed that if it was her, she would be able to change this hellish world.

.

『If there is no one who will help—then please become a hero who will do so. I believe that you have enough qualification for that.』

.

「Arshalia..... I'm」

Fugil stared at the vision of the girl at the back of his mind and muttered.

He almost died many times and bathed in Elixir each time to recover. He accidentally became a superhuman as the result of that.

He sought for more power in order to control Uroboros that had the power to change the world.

He fell asleep and dreamed of saving the world together with Arshalia.

After he woke up, even after he found that she had died, he kept chasing after the dream just as he promised.

Together with the wrecked remains of her dream, the Sacred Eclipse, he continued to repeat the history without end.

He would preserve the seed, protected it from the conflict, and entrusted the peaceful future to the next generation.

And then—when the balance of the world was gradually crumbling once more, when there were people oppressing other people, when there were people who could do nothing except letting themselves being exploited.

.

『If, people can't stop fighting each other no matter what. If everything has really become hopeless—let's forget everything and redo it.』

.

The Artifact, Uroboros.

He would use Arshalia's memento to reset the world and fought to protect the balance. But,

「A hero....., something like a hero.....doesn't exist anywhere.」

Before long everything would return back to nothing.

Peace would crumble without fail along with the flow of time.

Leaving behind only Fugil, the strongest and most skilled Drag-Knight.

Along with the strongest and greatest Artifact, Uroboros.

「The voice just now, was it a fake? Or perhaps——」

The answer wouldn't come out.

But, he continued to fight searching for the answer.

In order to carry out the hero's mission, until his body crumbled to dust and vanished.

「——Fugil! The enemy is coming! Prepare to meet him!」

When he came to his senses, Fugil was gripping Bahamut's control stick.

There was one thing he was sure of.

If there was no one to be the hero, then Fugil himself had to be one.

Right now in this place, there was one person who he raised and guided, someone who was exceedingly close to be the ideal king. However—he didn't have that qualification five years ago.

Therefore, he judged that person as the 『weakest』 in the day of revolution five years ago and casted him away.

But that person now—the vessel of king who he raised himself was standing in his way once more in this place.

Since that day, Lux had built and accumulated many things.

Now in this place, he would use all of those things to face him and proved his own qualification as king.

「It's impossible for you my wise younger brother—your justice is inadequate to accomplish the hero's mission!」

The jet black Drag-Ride transformed into a fantastic appearance with Over Limit and danced in the sky.

Hovering above the forest, Fugil pointed his sword toward his silver haired look-alike who appeared before his eyes.

On the stomach of Uroboros that had fallen down face up.

Using the hill of giant armor that was frayed with jutting out metals as foothold—the two crossed swords three times.

.

Part 32

「Are you alright, Ane-ue——!」

While Fugil was looking up to the sky in a daze, Lux entrusted Lisha who was in his embrace to Alma.

「I'm fine. You're overreacting, Alma. Since the past you're——」

Lisha smiled wryly with her head powerlessly lying on Alma's lap.

The damage from the gravity pressure that Lisha received was reduced by Reload on Fire, so her body was fortunately not in that much pain.

But, she had genuinely used up everything she had just now. Currently she couldn't even move a single arm.

But Lisha felt a mysterious feeling of satisfaction wrapping herself.

Just now, she used Sevens Heads in order to give Lux a chance of victory without considering her own life.

In the past, Lisha's father, the great hero Count Atismata abandoned her for the sake of the great cause that was the revolution——in return Lisha betrayed her father and switched side to the old empire.

But even though she had done such thing, she became the princess of the new kingdom after that due to her status as the child left behind by the great hero. She had a guilty conscience all this time because of that.

The her at that time didn't fight for the sake of the people who were suffering.

However, right now——.

「I'm sorry. Ane-ue.....! Until now, I never tried to understand you at all——」

Alma clung on Lisha while holding back her tear. Lisha smiled seeing her little sister like that.

For the first time, she felt like that she had really fought as the princess of the new kingdom.

She felt like that she had persisted with her pride.

Because she had Lux with her.

Because she had her comrades in Syvalles with her.

She was able to do so because she had been fighting together with them.

「I can feel like this is thanks to you all. Don't die, Lux.....」

Lisha prayed with only a single wish in her heart.

And then, she watched over her retainer who was fighting above the hill of steel.

.

Part 33

The sounds of clashing swords burst violently within the blizzard.

Jet black Drag-Rides were freely dancing on a hill made of silver wall.

Lux and Fugil were——fighting to their utmost limit using Over Limit.

Even though the sounds were resounding jarringly, it mysteriously didn't feel noisy in the ear.

His mind was clear and sharp like a blade even now with his body being extremely exhausted.

Just like the day of the revolution five years ago when he faced the old empire.

「HAAAAAAAAAH!」

Lux yelled as though he was roaring and mustered his remaining strength.

The two's tactics were similar but different.

Fugil who had Baptism applied to his whole body was superior in regard to physical ability and stamina against Lux.

Therefore he could ignore the stress that Over Limit put on his body and used the armor frame's mobility to the maximum limit to unleash powerful blow that the average Drag-Ride couldn't possibly block. Every single one of his blow was filled with the strength that would instantly kill if it landed directly.

——It inevitably eroded the opponent's nerve with extreme pressure that they weren't allowed to make even a single miss.

In contrast Lux's tactic was defending using his great sword while counterattacking.

Although, he would be defeated if he carelessly blocked Fugil's attack despite the two of them using the same Over Limit

He parried the enemy's attacks so that the core of the attack wouldn't meet its mark.

Other than that he would also step forward before the enemy's sword could reach the sufficient velocity and crushed the starting point of the attack.

Lux wouldn't be able to endure at all if he didn't lower Fugil's attack power by some percentage like that.

Even so, his armor would creak each time he guarded against Fugil's attack.

Using his discernment that he trained through the tournament in the royal capital and continued to polish even after that, he was barely able to endure Fugil's fierce attacks.

However, just being able to block Fugil's attacks didn't make them evenly matched.

Lux didn't even have three more minutes before he became unable to fight.

In contrast Fugil was still having strength remaining.

At this rate—he would definitely lose.

「You're going to defeat me and stop the Sacred Eclipse? Are you saying that you will take up the hero's mission in my place? That's impossible for you, my wise younger brother. You aren't fit for that duty. An incompetent like you who can only defend like that can't possibly—」

「.....」

Fugil had the composure to talk even while unleashing countless slashes.

But, Lux couldn't find any opening at all in Fugil's every movement.

Fugil was steadily shaving off his armor while also keeping up his vigilance toward Lux without slacking off.

Whether it was the secret techniques of Drag-Ride control, or the invocation of Divine Raiment, or Howling Roar, or Break Purge.

To Lux it looked like Fugil had prepared the solution to every move he could make.

「.....Tsu!?!」

Lux glided backward to take some distance, but Fugil's pursuit prevented him from that.

Even so he continued moving and used the unevenness of Uroboros's armor surface that they used as foothold—the terrain's advantage while dodging the attacks.

「The resolve to destroy, to cut down others. You can't be a ruler without that. An absolute cause, principle—they need the determination to accomplish it no matter the cost. Your path will end if you try to reach an understanding with someone and they betray you.」

In the past—Arshalia was killed by the members of the clan of traitor who she spared.

Fugil couldn't stop her from trying to save them.

Because the one who saved Fugil—someone who was originally a member of the clan of traitor that should be the enemy of Arcadia Empire was also her.

The intensity of the great sword that Fugil was swinging was increasing.

He strengthened the force of his blows to pry open Lux's tough guard.

If Lux used Bahamut's mobility to reduce the momentum of Fugil's attack, Fugil would change the momentum of his movement to compensate.

He transferred the momentum from the Drag-Ride's propulsion force into the sword's tip, stepped close to Lux, and slashed.

「You are the 『weakest』 —someone who can't throw away their naivety has no qualification to be king!」

Fugil knew.

That with Lux's method of doing things, he wouldn't be able to save and protect those important to him. However,

.

—*BAKIIINN!*

.

「.....Tsu!?!」

Chaos Brand that was swung down with all Fugil's strength was repelled back by Lux's great sword. Fugil watched it transpired with his eyes widened in surprise.

The special move to receive the opponent's attacks by focusing into the point where the attack was starting, pushing back the attack and destroying the weapon—Critical Hit.

The technique that Lux had polished using the Scale Blade that Lisha created for him. It destroyed the equilibrium of this battle.

「So you were sticking to defense not because you were unable to switch into offense—. It was for parrying and counterattacking at the same time.」

If Fugil was on guard against every method of counterattack and watching all his preliminary movement, then Lux would aim to break the opponent's

balance while keeping up his defense.

「—Howling Roar!」

Lux unleashed Howling Roar using the opening when Fugil was pushed behind with both of his armored arms lifted up, sending him flying.

Behind him, there was the armor of Uroboros that was broken and splintered up like an icicle.

Lux didn't just focus on the battle of wits using tactic.

He even grasped the shape of the terrain and prepared for the chance to overturn the table.

「—Reload on Fire!」

「—Reload on Fire!」

Fugil applied compression strengthening to the time of the area around him in order to stop Lux's movement.

Lux also activated Bahamut's Divine Raiment almost at the same time, decelerating the flow of time around him in the same ratio.

The flow of times of both sides were extremely decelerated that it looked like both combatants were stopping still.

Lux was rushing forward with his great sword raised, while Fugil was taking a stance to block the attack. The movements of the two of them were stopped by the first five seconds of their Divine Raiment.

In the later five seconds, they would surely enter their last battle of wits while their movements were accelerated to be dozens of times faster.

However—.

There were people who wanted to overturn the fate of these two.

Part 34

「Fugil——」

Arshalia held her breath inside the cockpit watching her master's predicament.

Uroboros's torso was destroyed by the gravity orb that Lisha fired. Now it couldn't activate its Divine Raiment—and also its special armaments properly.

Even so, in order to save her master Fugil, she desperately searched for any function that was still usable.

Endless, Zero One, and Infinity couldn't be used.

But, she noticed that these five seconds when the flow of time of Lux and Fugil was decelerated would be enough time to smash Lux from above using Uroboros's hand.

Arshalia gave her all in order to execute just that one movement—but,

「.....Won't, let you」

「——What!？」

An unhurried voice quietly entered the cockpit where the Automata Arshalia was sitting inside. Uroboros's right arm that was going to swing down was entwined with the wires of Pile Anchors.

The hand's movement was slightly diverted due to the powerful pull at the wires.

Uroboros's raised right arm fell not on the head of the stopped Lux, but at behind him.

The last attack that Arshalia attempted was prevented at the last second.

『My bad but, I had predicted that future beforehand. I asked her—to prevent that future from happening.』

Krulcifer who was standing above a rocky area sent her voice through Dragon Voice.

Fafnir was already seriously damaged, so it couldn't even attack or defend anymore.

Consequently only a part of its armor could materialize right now but—Krulcifer only focused on making future prediction using her Divine Raiment.

「Why can you still fight even after you have used up all your strength!? How——!」

「It's simple. With the power of love—there isn't anything stronger than that in this world.」

What made the members of Syvalles who were already in the death's door could revive was—their recovery rate was several stages faster compared to the ordinary human was thanks to the Baptism that had been applied on all of them.

They strengthened their body with Elixir after that looping parade ended so that less burden would be put on Lux.

But, that was just a single factor. It wasn't the main reason of their comeback.

「We can't, just keep sleeping like this.」

Celis wearing the half-destroyed Lindwurm was floating above the downed Uroboros. Even her Lance was already broken, but the cannon muzzle that

was protruding from her back was filled with all the energy she could muster.

「After all our country's princess and the man we love are fighting with their life on the line.」

They couldn't lose.

They couldn't possibly keep lying down without being able to do anything as they were in this predicament.

The resilience from Baptism and their stubbornness moved their bodies that shouldn't be able to move anymore and allowed them to wear their Divine Drag-Ride once more.

The Divine Drag-Ride Yato no Kami leaped on the air and Kirihome Yoruka thrust her Blade into Uroboros under her feet.

She ran Spell Code near the cockpit where Arshalia was at and gave a new order.

「You want to control Uroboros? What can you do at this point——」

Spell Code could freely control other person's Drag-Ride, but it would need considerable power to control a Drag-Ride this huge.

Furthermore Uroboros right now was in a state that couldn't move properly anymore.

It didn't seem likely that it would be worth it to forcefully move Uroboros in this state.

But, Yoruka's aim was something else.

「Naturally—I understand that. But, I won't let you do anything more than this. There is a meaning in doing that.」

「——!？」

Spell Code's character strings were spreading on Uroboros's armor surface and sent a certain command.

The barrier that was covering the surface vanished. The armor opened from the inside and the hatch that was hiding the Force Core located in the shoulder was opened.

「Don't tell me——」

Lux had brought back the blueprint of Uroboros from the central and showed it to everyone.

Uroboros had three energy sources. If all of them were destroyed, it would become impossible for Uroboros to repair itself on its own.

「I'll leave the rest to you, Celis-san.」

「Yes, leave it to me.」

Celis answered while floating in the air, at the same time a sphere of light was fired from the cannon platform on Lindwurm's armored shoulders.

Starlight Zero.

The cannon that was Lindwurm's special armament fired, at the same time Celis vanished using Divine Gate's teleportation.

「No way, impossible..... Our Uroboros, it can't possibly——!」

The Automata shuddered from imagining the future that would happen in several more seconds.

For more than a thousand years, people who turned this greatest and strongest Artifact inoperable had never appeared.

However, now.

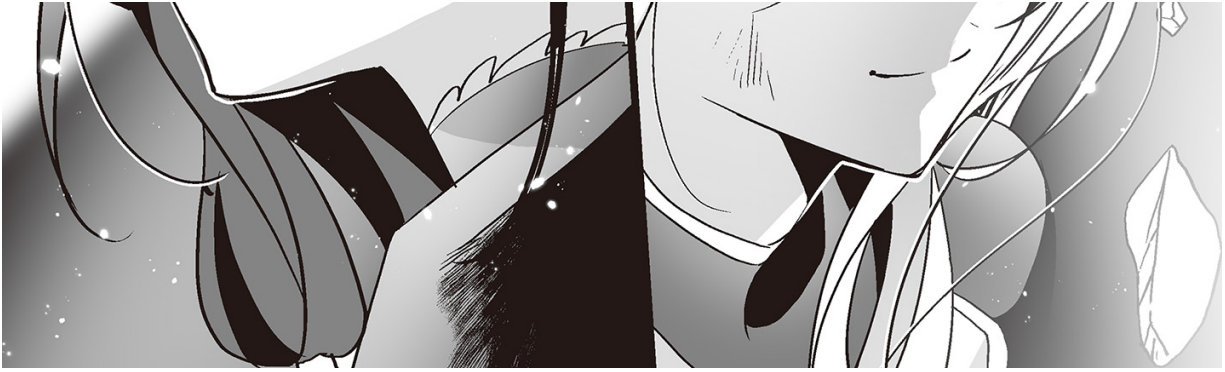
The girls who had grown stronger together with Lux Arcadia——accomplished that unprecedented feat.

「The Artifact Uroboros—is shot down.」

Krulcifer who got down from above the large rock and hid behind it muttered in satisfaction.

Right after that—the deadly light bullet that Celis fired touched Uroboros's shoulder and blasted the Force Core.





Part 35

Several seconds before Krulcifer, Celis, Philuffy, and Yoruka stood up to fight together—.

Lux and Fugil were also carrying out their last exchange.

The support attack from Automata Arshalia was stopped by the girls of Syvalles.

Lux didn't have any time to take any notice of that.

The two of them were within the range of each other's sword.

But, they were concentrating all their focus within the flow of time that was decelerated until near zero.

It was long—.

Lux was feeling like the time was stretched for eternity inside the compression strengthening of time that they both activated against each other.

Fugil's sword was pulled behind him in preparation to slash, while Lux's sword was raised above his head to slash down. They were readying themselves for the later five seconds where the super acceleration would begin.

Either way—right now Lux had no stamina to maintain the Over Limit even longer than this.

The next attack would be the last.

<ruby>Technique<rt>Skill</rt></ruby>, <ruby>life<rt>strength</rt></ruby>.

Even <ruby>ingenuity<rt>thought</rt></ruby>—Lux was pouring his everything into his Drag-Ride.

But even with all of those—he wouldn't be able to defeat the man before him.

However, unlike that time, now there was a sense of reassurance inside his chest.

Greifer, Mel, Soffice, Rosa, Magialca, Alma, Aeryl.

Krulcifer, Celis, Philuffy, Yoruka, the Triad. Everyone had cut open the path for him, leading him until this far.

The comrades who believed in him.

His little sister Airi who became his moral support.

Singlen who stood in his way as a powerful enemy.

And then—his elder brother Fugil who guided him five years ago so he could fight. He was thankful to all of them.

Above all else, he was glad to himself who had done nothing but reckless things until now, but kept getting his wish granted even then.

That was why, he had decided what his last move would be.

The secret technique that he had continued to polish in that tournament as the Weakest Undefeated.

He would bet everything to Quick Draw.

Within the flow of time that was almost completely stopped, Lux predicted what Fugil's next move would be based on the battle until now.

And then.

『Your Divine Drag-Ride—I want to touch it until the end.』

He would bet everything into this Drag-Ride that Lisha had continued to maintain, repair, and fine tune for him—he moved!

.

In the earlier five seconds where the Reload on Fire of both sides stretched out the flow of time of each other.

Lux's opponent, Fugil was thinking.

What was he hoping, wishing for?

He predicted Lux's intention in order to accomplish his mission as a hero.

It wouldn't even take twenty seconds before Lux's Bahamut would reach its operation limit.

Fugil used his discernment. He tried imagining meeting Lux head on with all his skills that he had continued to polish for more than a thousand years.

He could do it without problem. He didn't feel like he would lose.

No matter what kind of hardship or trouble he met in the past, he had continued to survive and win them all until now.

He had the confidence that he could defeat Lux.

But, at the same time he also had the conviction that he wouldn't be able to defeat Lux.

Contradiction.

For some reason alarm bell was ringing inside the brain of Fugil whose body was at a stop.

(What——? This out of place feeling)

He couldn't find the answer.

But, he knew that the answer would come to him soon enough.

Fugil's wish was to continue to fight as the hero.

No——.

(.....Wrong. What I wished for——my true objective was)

Why was he thinking something like this now?

The words that were said by Arshalia's AI who appeared before this.

Those words contained a fragment of the answer that Fugil had continued to seek by repeating history.

.

『Even they aren't bad people deep inside. Their hearts are just frayed because they were hurting for so many years. Weren't you the one who proved that to me?』

.

The imperial princess Arshalia saved a member of the clan of traitor that was hostile to the empire——Fugil and took him in as her comrade.

However, because of that——due to that belief of hers, because she tried to save everyone, she was betrayed and died.

Their dream to right the world was——.

Their dream to save all the people who died unseen by others because of misfortune couldn't be realized.

Since that day, Fugil had forgotten the answer all this time and searched for it.

He kept the balance of the world for more than a thousand years and saved the weak.

He searched for the vessel of king who could become a hero.

When he saw Lux, Fugil's heart that should be dead was stirred.

(Just what in the world I was wishing for?)

Fugil moved his Divine Drag-Ride while feeling convinced of his victory and defeat at the same time.

He started moving more than ten times faster in the 『later five seconds』 of the Reload on Fire.

That time finally arrived. The instantaneous offense and defense burst out.

.

Lux brandished his Chaos Brand to swing it down toward the Force Core on the shoulder.

In respond Fugil pulled his sword behind around his waist's height.

Lux was going to slash from above to below, while Fugil would slash from below to above.

This situation—was advantageous for Lux if they clashed upfront.

But, Fugil was aiming to parry Lux's initial attack aside before striking back.

It could be seen from the preliminary movement of Fugil's Bahamut—, it slightly dropped its center of gravity and gathered strength.

「—HAAaAAAAAAH!」

Therefore Lux pretended to slash down while slightly shifting his swing's timing.

Fugil's plan to deflect the starting point of Lux's slash should be destroyed by that and Lux's full powered downward slash would hit the armored shoulder—but,

「—!？」

But, Fugil also stopped swinging up his sword in the middle and took a defensive stance right away.

All the energy that was circulating within the great sword was joined with the barrier. He showed the stance of blocking using all his strength.

(I was read? My Quick Draw is—)

He didn't know whether Fugil had read his thought or he had seen through his preliminary movement.

He didn't care which was the case.

He couldn't stop his attack anymore.

There was only one thing that Lux could do right now.

That was to muster his whole being, everything he had—and struck, that was all.

「—GO-OOOOOoOOO!」

A voice resounded. Perhaps it was Lisha's yell, or perhaps Lux's own voice.

Lux couldn't even spare any thought to understand that and swung down Chaos Brand with all his energy.

Fugil's eyes opened wide. He blocked that attack with his right armored arm and his Blade as shield.

.

BAKIIIIIIiiiiIIII!

.

An impact that felt as if all the air was blasted away pierced the surrounding—, the blocking sword snapped and the armor creaked.

However—Fugil's Bahamut wasn't damaged. It had enough strength remaining to continue fighting.

「—Ha」

A smile formed on the lips of Lux who had used up all his energy.

In the end—Lux was unable to surpass the hero of the beginning Fugil.

Even at the last exchange where they predicted each other, Fugil performed a Drag-Ride control that surpassed the possible movement enabled by Over Limit. Lux's prediction missed and Fugil succeeded in blocking his attack.

—The fight was settled.

He was unable to win against Fugil.

However, there was no regret inside Lux.

He had gave his everything to face this opponent.

「So, I can't win.....」

Lux was going to close his eyes and surrendered his consciousness to the fatigue, but a sight that he never even dreamed of entered his eyes.

.....*Crack crack crack crackkk!*

Countless cracks spread all over Fugil's Bahamut and it shattered.

Without understanding what had just happened, Lux pushed down his Chaos Brand that was in contact with Fugil's great sword.

Its tip sunk into the shoulder of Fugil who was only in his pilot suit now. The blade didn't stop and reached the heart.

Lux immediately pulled away the sword. Then fresh blood spurted like fountain from the body that was cut open.

The fight was settled.

It was settled with Lux's victory.

.

Part 36

「What is, going on?」

「I don't know. But——」

Krulcifer and Philuffy were staring at one spot while murmuring with small voice.

The two of them together with Yoruka and Celis climbed up on the fallen Uroboros's stomach and gathered.

They were standing on the chest area near the shoulder. When their gaze moved toward the battle between Lux and Fugil, it was already decided.

From a glance, it looked like Lux's attack was predicted and got perfectly blocked, but——.

Right after that, it was Fugil who got his armor destroyed.

「Did, Lux win?」

「——It seems so. That's also how it looks like in my eyes.」

Celis muttered in astonishment while Yoruka smiled.

Right after that——, the remaining members including Lisha who were hiding at the temple site cheered out.

.

Part 37

「——I see, so it's like that.」

Fugil muttered without any change in his expression while blood was flowing from his shoulder.

Why it was Fugil's Bahamut that was destroyed when he had predicted Lux's attack and succeeded in blocking it?

The reason was——.

『Fugil! Your Bahamut, it's already——』

「It already reached its limit huh. This Drag-Ride's frame was already at its breaking point due to Over Limit's recoil.」

Fugil's control was undoubtedly flawless.

But, Fugil who had received Baptism in number that should originally be impossible and turned into a superhuman that surpassed normal human didn't notice.

He had repeatedly performed control that was originally should be prevented by the limiters that were removed by Over Limit. Even though the pilot, Fugil himself was alright from doing that, but those performance surmounted Bahamut's endurance and it broke down.

Fugil didn't notice that because he was focusing to the battle until now.

He was thinking too much about how to win against Lux——against Lux and his comrades that he was losing awareness of his own Drag-Ride.

However this——couldn't be said as completely Fugil's own blunder.

In addition it also wasn't bad luck.

—He simply didn't realize.

This tragedy happened because the Drag-Knight called Fugil surpassed the power of the Drag-Ride.

When someone used Over Limit, the Drag-Knight's body would scream in pain and normally it would be them who got downed first.

Their bone would snap, their muscle would tear, their fatigue would accumulate. They wouldn't be able to do reckless moves in succession.

But such thing didn't happen in Fugil's case.

He didn't notice because his abnormally strong toughness.

Since Arshalia died, Fugil fought alone for more than a thousand years.

He thoroughly tempered himself. He was a superhuman who didn't even feel pain and never lost against anyone.

He kept winning until now.

Fugil was defeated because he was the strongest person of a type that the world had never seen before.

Lux himself was running out of strength because he was a human with limit, but he obtained victory as a Drag-Knight who protected his own Drag-Ride.

They grew together and depended on each other, along with Lisha's support.

「—Fugil」

「It seems, I have spent.....too long by myself.」

His words leaked out from the corner of his lips along with a trickle of blood.

His body was swaying while heading toward the edge of the collapsed Uroboros.

Fugil's battle was already over.

It had ended in that day more than a thousand years ago.

The current him was the same like the Sacred Eclipse, a broken device.

That day, the dream that he saw together with Arshalia, it had ended since a long time ago in the past.

They supported and complemented each other—that was exactly why they could see that dream.

Fugil was stronger than anyone.

His strong feeling lost its place to go to, then he wandered for eternity without end, seeking for just a single answer.

Fugil's wish, his hope wasn't 『the mission of hero』, it also wasn't 『to show the proper path of human』.

The true answer that Fugil was seeking.

It took a very long time until he found that answer.

『Fugil——!』

Then, he heard the magnified yell of the Automata Arshalia. Fugil take a step off the edge by himself.

A few ml below, there was the blade of the giant Blade that Uroboros dropped.

He was falling straight toward it—there Lux grabbed his elder brother's hand.

Bahamut's armor that Lux was wearing was also already dispelled.

It felt like he would faint immediately from the extreme exhaustion he was feeling, but he gritted his teeth and maintained his consciousness with his will.

「—What are you doing?」

Fugil looked dubiously at Lux while hanging in midair.

Lux strongly grabbed that limp hand with his own hand and exerted his strength to pull Fugil up.

Lux was struggling with his body that had run out of strength to save Fugil.

「Are you planning to repeat the same mistake again? I should have told you before to have the determination to destroy your enemy.」

Fugil told Lux with a cold smile.

He told the descendant of his family—his temporary little brother who should be the one who slain him, the strongest enemy.

「Even so, I—」

Even Lux himself didn't understand why he was trying to save Fugil.

However, he was unable to let go of his hand.





Seeing that, Arshalia's figure and words from a thousand years ago were brought back in Fugil's eyes.

.

『Because, I can't believe that you're really a bad person——』

She opened her heart to ascertain everything with her own eyes.

『It's fine if you just become the hero. If there isn't any hero anywhere, then you can——』

.

——That's right.

.

Fugil was attracted by the beauty of the act of saving people. He dreamed of a hero and aimed to become one.

However——he despaired when the wickedness that was the true nature of they, humans was thrust before him. He came to doubt his own way of living.

There wasn't any meaning, in saving human.

Human wasn't worth saving.

That was why——he searched for the vessel of king who could lead humans righteously. He kept resetting history searching for a just world.

But, now.....there was someone who was stretching out his hand toward his enemy, just like Arshalia in that day.

It was someone who descended from the clan of traitor.

Someone who was born from the old empire that was called as absolute evil in the past, a person who descended from the same blood like Fugil——.

.

「——Do you see Arshalia, there is a hero here. A hero who came from among the people you saved that day.」

.

The answer that Fugil was searching for.

There was a path ahead after people saved other people.

「You weren't—mistaken, not at all.」

Fugil made a fleeting smile.

Right after that, the body that had lived and fought for more than a thousand years lost color—crumbling into dust.

.

Part 38

Lux saw Fugil closing his eyes and turning into ash.

He was most likely, someone who was more serious and kinder than anyone.

It was because of that he wandered searching for the truth.

He was—exactly the same like Lux.

He wasn't really a different person from Lux, he was a hero who followed the same path.

But, Fugil was too strong that he dreamed too much.

He didn't content himself with just those within his sight, he also tried to do something about those who were outside his sight.

He lost his path when he lost his ideal other half Arshalia.

He was lost within a labyrinth without exit.

He wandered in his aimless search.

Even Lux himself, if he was unable to save Philuffy and Airi, if he was unable to save everyone in Syvalles.

(Surely, I too would—)

He would be possessed by the mission to carry out the revolution. He would live by continuing to hate the old empire.

He would be crushed under the wish that couldn't be fulfilled and lost his heart.

However—, he was saved from that by Fugil.

When Lux lost his mother and lived in anguish—.

He tried to influence the old empire with the right method, but at that time, there was no one in the imperial family who would listen to Lux who was the youngest son.

With only one exception—Fugil.

At that time, he thought of Fugil who talked and listened to him as hero.

However, Lux finally understood.

In this world, there wasn't anything like immortal winner or righteous hero.

Just like what Lux saw in Fugil's action.

Just like what Lisha and Alma saw in the Black Hero.

Just like what the people who were oppressed by the old empire saw in Count Atismata.

A hero was the shape of salvation that people saw in their own heart.

.

(—I, couldn't become a hero.)

Lisha, Krulcifer, Celis, Philuffy, Yoruka, Airi.

Without them at his side, he wouldn't be able to do anything, much less saving the world.

It was wrong to think that he was able to do anything by himself.

It was fine to not become a hero.

It was fine to not suffer from trying to become something that he couldn't become.

But—if he could aim to chase after that ideal and inspired hope in everyone—.

Lux realized that he should aim to live in that way.

.

「Farewell Fugil. My hero—」

.

Uroboros's Sword Device that was in the grasp of the disappearing Fugil slowly fell and stabbed the pile of snow on the ground, becoming the grave marker for Fugil himself.

Someone who could control this Artifact, wouldn't appear anymore in this world.

The end of the hero who continued to fight for the people while being human himself.

After watching that end, there were voices coming somewhere.

He heard loud cheers from the temple site where the allied force was taking refuge.

Amidst that, there was someone flying his way in the arms of Alma who was wearing EX Wyvern.

Lux relaxed when he saw Lisha's smiling face, then he let go of his consciousness.

Epilogue – The First King

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Part 1

The long battle finally ended.

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After that—Lux ran out of strength and slept for several days. When he woke up, the cleanup of the aftermath was starting.

In the end—Avalon's mechanism, the world revision function ceased functioning together with the destruction of the central.

Strictly speaking—by using the function of the Moon and the Garden, it could be repaired even if it would be difficult.

However, it was decided that the power of the Ruins wouldn't be used overtly anymore.

With the exception of some people who coveted the benefits, the talk between everyone was progressing in the direction of basically sealing the Ruins.

They only decided to seal them instead of destroying them outright was to leave behind a way to escape great tragedy that would affect mankind's survival, like natural disaster for example.

It seemed that Aeril and Soffice would be entrusted with the management of the Ruins. Various efforts were done in order to convince the leaders of each country.

The creation of Abyss would also be stopped completely, so the turn for Drag-Ride to make appearance would also decrease.

It would be impossible to dispose all of them unless Endless was used to make mankind forgot about Drag-Ride, so it was decided to gradually decrease their number.

It would be most difficult to abandon a mighty military power once it had been obtained, but that would be the new work for Lux and others.

Magialca was appointed as an advisor of the Seven Dragon Paladins. It seemed she would form an organization of international alliance after this.

She was someone who was faithful to her desire, but she had a sense of balance, so Lux could agree to leave these matters to her to a certain degree.

.

They made the story that Queen Raffi was targeted by the remaining Ragnarok and got killed. The news was announced to the populace later on and she was given a solemn funeral.

The populace showed their respect to Queen Raffi who was the successor of the great hero Count Atismata and saw her off.

The truth couldn't be publicized to the public, but even Lisha seemed to accept this state of affair, that it was fine like this.

However, they couldn't keep living in sadness forever.

The people who survived had the duty to live in the present.

They had to take over the things that their predecessors tried to protect.

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And then, three months later after the final battle. It was spring.

The third years in the academy of fortress city Cross Field graduated and new students enrolled—.

The new kingdom—was going to welcome a new change.

Part 2

「How are the Automatons who got rebooted doing, Soffice?」

「No problem. Everyone is behaving normally. Their memory has also been properly reset.」

「I see, then we are right on the schedule.」

Inside a room in the seventh Ruin, the Moon. Aeryl and Soffice were conversing with each other. They were wearing pilot suit and a robe over it. A crest that they two of them decided together was engraved on their robes.

World Creation Organization, an organization that managed and supervised the Ruins in the world—.The two of them were appointed as the first leader and advisor of that organization.

「You can rest assured desu. It might be a slightly difficult event for the shy Soffice desu, but—」

「Re Plica is already like this. She gets impudent when I asked her to relax when talking with me.....」

The Automata with mechanical fox ears, Re Plica was seeing off Soffice while teasing her.

In respond Soffice was complaining with a reproachful gaze but—.

「Ahaha..... But, isn't it great that you two are just like in the past even though her memory of that time is gone?」

Aeryl who let her long hair stretched down smiled wryly seeing the two's exchange.

Re Plica's lost memory shouldn't be coming back, but for some reason these two looked like they were getting along well.

「But, you're really going to do it?」

「Yep. It'll be little by little but—I want to try it.」

The two's role was—managing the technology sleeping in the Ruins, making them available for use, transferring the authority of use, etc.

Many Drag-Rides were already leaked outside, but Elixir was planned to be sealed and to have its existence itself erased.

This medicine that was refined by using human lives was accompanied with the certain risk of people fighting for it.

A secret medicine that could change human body's function—their life span and even their talent just by getting injected and adapting to it would stimulate human desire too much.

To bring out technology from the Ruins, these two would consider its risk carefully first before making a rule for its use that had to be strictly followed.

Similarly, things like Abyss that could be used as military force without any inconvenience would also be abolished. They would reduce the battle strength that was protecting the Ruins from the thieves.

In exchange, they intended to thoroughly use the system to tighten the security.

It would take monumental effort and amount of time to construct and implement a system that wouldn't need any sacrifice of human lives.

Even so, Aeryl felt that it was something worth doing.

It was also related with the new future of the Lords.

「Then, let's go. We can't miss the enthronement ceremony today after all.」

「Yep. I'm also, looking forward to it.」

「Take care desu! Leave taking care of the children of the Lords we just found to me desu!」

「Please do, Plica. Then, we're going.」

Aeril and Soffice equipped their respective Drag-Ride and flew away from the Moon.

The two of them would entrust the future to the new hope that they found in the Moon.

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「——How should I say it, this is a mysterious feeling. Even though three months has passed since them, it felt like it happened just yesterday.」

A petite girl wearing a chic black dress——Mel Gizalut of the Seven Dragon Paladins was watching the scenery of the royal capital from inside the horse carriage.

She went home to her country after that last battle. Since then this was her first time coming to the new kingdom but——that was her frank impression.

The long years of disdainful act toward female was overturned at the same time with the establishment of the new kingdom. Raffi served as the symbol of that, but then she died. Mel thought that the royal capital's streets would be enveloped with sadness because of it, and yet it looked like the place was still as flourishing as several months ago.

However this lively air wasn't because the populace was indifferent toward their queen's death.

The woman who established the new kingdom didn't leave behind nothing.

One could see how the people here were paying close attention and holding hope to the strength of the new generation who succeeded the old generation.

「Mu, isn't this Pope Nias and Lady Mel Gizalut from Ymir Theocracy. Please this way. The other honorable guests are already arriving.」

「You, why are you doing this kind of underling job? Aren't your position more or less a high one?」

Mel was surprised seeing the girl with short ponytail who was wearing a pilot suit and a mantel on top of it.

She was Lisha's little sister, Alma who was thought as dead in the history of the new kingdom, but now she was serving as a guide in the palace.

「Those are taboo words. My position is a fresh military cadet who has only just enrolled.」

Alma was—Lisha's little sister. In the end her true identity as the second daughter of Count Atismata wasn't disclosed to the populace.

They didn't want to stir up the new kingdom even more for now after so many mayhems had already taken place. Alma herself also wasn't fixated to her status as princess.

No—more accurately, she already lost her fixation to it.

After getting involved in that battle, she realized that her pride shouldn't be about her bloodline but her way of living.

She couldn't compare at all against Lisha and Lux's noble resolve.

She wished to at least become a new officer in the new kingdom and supported the two—she also told that wish of her to her big sister Lisha.

『What? And here I thought that I'll have a fellow comrade who know about the pain of being a princess.』

She responded by cracking a joke like that and they laughed together. Alma too was saved by that reaction.

「—And, has the others come already?」

「yes, Lady Magialca and Sir Greifer will be a bit delayed though.」

「Haa, that man is still slovenly as usual.」

When Mel grumbled in exasperation like that,

「How about you two do your gossiping later? You are blocking the way here. Our way that is.」

A red haired girl appeared from behind and spoke provocatively.

It was the Dragon Paladin of the reborn Heiburg Republic—Rosa Granhide.

After the battle was over, she returned to her country together with Magialca and intervened there. Now she was serving as an aide of Magialca who became the king of the country.

「It has been a long time since I saw that persona. Could it be your personality has reverted back to how it was?」

「I want to meet with Lux-sama quickly..... Aa, how exciting. I have to make sure to use this chance to repay his kindness.....personally too.」

After Mel's question, Rosa's high-handed attitude crumbled, leaving behind a maiden with dreamy expression.

Alma and Mel stared at her with exasperation. Then Magialca's face peeked out from the carriage behind.

「It'll turn into an international problem, so stop with your plan. Also, don't get absorbed with reminiscing in this kind of place. Do that after the banquet start.」

「The former captain lady is reprimanding you women, y'all are still too green huh.」

「Hey, I don't want to hear that from someone who came late like you!」

Greifer also came from further behind. Mel retorted the moment she saw him.

They all were making noises in nostalgia with the people who went through life and death struggles together with them—the people who might become their cooperative partner, worthy rival, or perhaps even friend hereafter.

Right after that, Rosa looked up to the clear blue sky and narrowed her eyes from the radiant sunlight while smiling.

「Enough chatter, those two are also coming. Finallyy.」

Her cheeks loosened seeing the arrival of Aeryl and Soffice. And then cheers along with footsteps that felt like a rumble in the ground came from the surrounding of the castle.

Those were—cheering voices that were filled with expectation and hope toward those who would shoulder the future of New Kingdom Atismata.

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Part 3

The girls were walking through a stone corridor with exaltation dancing in their chest.

A girl who was wearing a luxurious red mantle above her uniform energetically knocked the room's door.

「It's going to be the time soon, Lux-chi! The people of the castle town are gathering faster than expected out there.」

「Tillfur, stop calling him like that already. You too are now a senior in the academy. You won't give a good example to the others like that.」

「Again with that, you're really stiff Sharis. I told you I get it. It's only here that I'm being like this.」

Sharis grumbled beside Tillfur whose brown ponytail was shaking cheerfully.

She had graduated from the academy earlier and right now she was given the post as Syvalles's adviser as academy staff.

She was given the post there to obtain experience for commanding army in the future as the daughter of the army's deputy commander.

Currently she was spending her days coming and going between the capital and the fortress city frequently.

However, perhaps because the Triad had been disbanded, right now Tillfur's tension was rising high from the feeling nostalgic that the three of them were all together like this.

Sharis was also feeling the same.

During the one year since Lux enrolled in the academy—they tasted near death experiences several times and even got injured some times, there were also a lot of troubles.

Even so—those experiences felt like something precious that was hard to come by.

And above all else, right now they still had all their limbs attached without lacking anything and all their comrades beside them. They couldn't help but felt happiness.

「It was really, a good time.」

While she was flooded with emotions, Noct's calm reply came from inside the room.

「It's alright now. They have finished changing clothes.」

「.....Wait, whatcha doing there Noct! Didn't we have that talk about how stealing a march is no no!?!」

Tillfur kicked the door open and rushed into the room. Inside the room that was made of stone there was Lux in formal attire smiling.

His troubled looking smile looked just like usual for the girls.

「I'm also Lux-san's maid, so it's only natural that I help him dressing up.」

「If you're talking about that, then I'm also Lux-chi's guard!」

「The role of you two are different, so that won't back up your claim at all you know, Till.」

Sharis lightly patted the head of Tillfur who was burning with rivalry.

「—Sorry for this, we're still being loud even in an important event like this.」

「No. I was nervous, so this help to distract me.」

「See! It's just as I thought, it's good that we're staying close like this! We're also serving as her highness's guards!」

「Can you stop calling me like that.....? I'm just an extra beside Nii-san after all.」

Airi replied to the Triad with a conflicted look.

Airi was clad in a pure white dress. She was sitting on a chair.

「I'm sorry. I caused trouble even for you Airi.」

「Nii-san is saying that at this point?」

Lux got panicked when Airi stared reproachfully at him.

「But——this will really be the la-」

「It's better if Nii-san doesn't say something like 『This is the last time』 . Nii-san surely won't stop sticking your neck if there is some kind of problem happening again anyway.」

「A-ahaha.....」

Lux awkwardly laughed at Airi's reminder.

He remembered doing just what she accused him so many times that he couldn't object.

Even so, there was no doubt that the problem this time was top class in how troublesome it was.

He was thankful to Airi that she was still accompanying him even then.

「It's my win in this argument. I wonder if the day Nii-san can win against me will really come.」

Airi sent a mischievous gaze toward Lux and made fun of him. Beside her, the Triad were making meaningful smiles.

「You said this and that, even though in the end you can't possibly do something like refusing your Onii-chan's request.」

「Perhaps in reality it's missy Airi who is the loser here.」

「No. Be quiet you two. I won't allow you break Airi's pride.」

「I can hear what you are saying there, you three!」

Airi went red hearing Tillfur, Sharis, and Noct saying their respective opinions and raised her voice.

Airi was—in the end after that she stayed in bed for a long time from the exhaustion. As expected she wasn't suited to be a Drag-Knight. Because she understood that, she wouldn't participate in battle anymore, but she planned to keep doing her part from here on too as the one in charge of managing the information in Syvalles.

For Airi who was sociable and well-known, he would surely cause her troubles from here on too.

Even so he felt happy to have this tenacious little sister accompanying him.

「Stop making stupid talks and let's go already. Have you finished preparing, Nii-san?」

「—Yeah. Let's go, Airi.」

Lux too Airi's hand that was covered with long white glove and exited the room.

They walked through the long stone corridor toward the terrace with the Triad following them behind as guards.

Lux noticed something important through the looping parade and the battle against Fugil for Avalon.

Lux—couldn't become a hero on his own.

To see someone as hero meant pushing one's own ideal to that person.

「.....」

Lux saw the blue sky that was expanding at the other side of the corridor's handrail and thought.

Fugil and Arshalia, they tried to become the hero and goddess to answer the expectation that was placed on them.

They aimed to become an existence that couldn't possibly be reached as long as they stayed human. Even so they continued to fight.

They were cornered by great ideal and dream that couldn't be shouldered by human's hand—and got lost in a labyrinth.

After slowly walking through the corridor for a while, he saw a familiar blue haired girl standing ahead.

Krulcifer who was wearing a dress saw Lux and smiled.

「As I thought, you look good in that attire——」

「Don't flatter me too much. Even now I'm forcing myself a lot after all.」

Lux was feeling pressure from the girl's praise. Then,

「It's fine if you don't force yourself. We will support you if there is any trouble. That's why——」

「Yep. Rest assured, Lu-chan.」

Celis who was wearing a military uniform was encouraging him with a strong and kind voice.

Beside her, his childhood friend was also giving him a faint smile.

「—Thank you. Celis-senpai, Phi-chan.」

Yoruka who was wearing her usual black outfit was also standing beside the stair.

「Good luck Aruji-sama. I too shall accompany you even until the depth of hell, until your wish is realized.」

「That's reassuring but..... Don't cause any ruckus in the ceremony okay?」

「I'll strive to do so.」

Yoruka smiled guilelessly toward him. She was just like usual as expected.

After receiving the encouragement from the four, Lux went up the stairs with Airi and the others.

(The peace of the new kingdom—I can't shoulder such heavy burden by myself. I can't—save the whole world by myself.)

What he accomplished was possible only because Lisha and the others, everyone was there for him.

If they weren't there for him, he couldn't possibly accomplish it.

That was why—he didn't intend to shoulder the burden by himself even from here on.

He went up the stairs and came out to the open terrace of the palace.

When he showed his face to the populace, the honored guests from other countries, and the nobles who gathered here, very loud cheers were raised.

There, Lisha who was wearing a red dress and Celis's father, the head of one of the four great nobles, Dist Ralgris were already waiting.

「Then, I shall introduce.....the new king who will lead the new kingdom for this one year. —King Lux.」

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WAaaaaAAAAAA.....!

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Cheers so loud it could burst the eardrums were reverberating in the whole area like a ripple.

Lux watched the populace with a calm gaze and slowly waved his hand.

「It will only be for a year, but I will serve as the king of the new kingdom during that time. I will have to rely on Lord Dist's assistance in regard to the political matter, but I intend to play my role to the best of my ability in order to improve the new kingdom to become an even better country.」

From now on Lux would still be a student in the academy while also taking up the role as the king at the same time. This was decided from the discussion with the four great nobles and the consuls.

Currently the central figures of the new kingdom were gone because of various incidents and accidents. Lisha's presence alone would be lacking to unite the populace.

A figure with strong unifying force was necessary to bring together the worried populace.

In this one year Lux had raised many accomplishments, got his criminal collar removed, and the populace also came to recognize him. If it was Lux, he wasn't lacking anything in that point.

Of course, in the end Lux was only king at the surface. Most of the governing would be carried out by Lord Dist of the four great nobles but—even then he was undoubtedly a king.

From here on an effort to switch the governing system to republicanism would begin. This role would serve as a bridge in that effort.

In order to spread the modest peace that he wished for, he decided to walk toward that ideal together with the girls who fought with him and stayed at his side.

「I am—not that strong. I cannot become a hero who can save everything in this world. However.....」

He exchanged glance with Lisha and Airi. The two of them returned a heated gaze toward him.

His courage welled up seeing that.

「I wish that more and more people can find something that only you yourself can do. I wish to spread the will for everyone to help each other to even more people.」

Just like how Philuffy saved him from the loneliness when she was a child.

He wouldn't try to be a hero who wanted to save every single people in need, but someone who could show others the path to do so themselves as much as possible.

「I think there will be time where I stumble due to my lack of strength. I think there'll be also times where I encounter misfortune and toyed by fate so that things don't go well. But——」

Lux cut off his words and looked over the populace before declaring.

「My friends from the academy who has been supporting me all this time, my experiences from everything I had gone through, they have taught me. That we can become happy by overcoming those hardships. That's why, I wish to use this one year to think of the way to create such country.」





The people were listening to Lux's speech with a quiet expression.

Before long small applause could be heard here and there before they became a loud cheer that reverberated through the spring's blue sky.

Part 4

After finishing the coronation greeting together with Lisha, there was a break for several hours that was followed by a banquet.

The battle against other countries concerning the Ruins—the battle against the negative history that was the old empire.

And then—the battle against the past era that led to this situation.

After running through the long and painful fierce battles and obtaining this temporary result, the people who gathered here rejoiced and cheered on Lux who became the new king.

And then—three days later.

After the Seven Dragon Paladins and the important people of other countries returned home, the last event was going to be held right now in the royal capital Lordgalia.

「However, I never thought that the joyous occasions will keep coming like this after all of those sad times.」

One of the citizens of the capital, a middle-aged woman with wide girth was looking up to the palace with a news leaflet in her hand.

「Yeah, you're right. I never thought that King Lux will do this kind of wedding right after his coronation—. But, this might be a good idea in order to restore the new kingdom right now.」

The woman's husband, a man with thick black beard smiled meaningfully.

「It will go well if it's King Lux. He is the one who brought together the allied force in that great war.」

Although the citizens were also harboring some curiosity, they were undoubtedly giving their blessing to this last event.

The bell of the bell tower would resound before long. People were gathering.

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Lux's marriage ceremony would be held in the capital's cathedral after this.

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It was going to be done before his return to the fortress city Cross Field, where a lot of people were waiting for his return.

Afterword

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Long time no see. This is Akatsuki. Thank you very much as usual.

The main story finally reach a stopping place in this volume 19, but it will still continue.

I plan for the last volume to be wholly reserved for the epilogue.

Usually there won't be any need to go that far, but with this series, I thought that 『the heroines are too many』 and 『many people will be dissatisfied if I don't do it properly』, so I thought that I want at least one whole volume of pages for it and do just that.

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Lux in effect had gotten together with everyone, but how will he take responsibility for it from here on, and what kind of conclusion the girls are wishing for?

I'm sure that a lot of people are curious which heroine Lux will get married with, but all of you readers have been keeping company with this series for so long, so I plan to conclude the last volume in the way that can satisfy as many readers as possible (in other words.....it's that kind of thing).

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Last time I'm giving exposition regarding the birth of Yoruka and Airi's characters. Continuing in this volume, I'll try giving exposition about Celis and Philuffy. I'm following the order in reverse here.

First about Celis—I think I have done quite well with her character. Celis came out in third volume as a necessary factor for the new development in the story as well as taking the position to become a wall in Lux's way, but I think I managed to make her embodying the two aspects of a cute senpai and an awe-inspiring senpai. She is a character I'm pleased with. I like them all though.

As for Philuffy, I think she is the character who I poured my love into the most. Though I say that, I have a warped passion, so I have a habit of imposing a harsh trial to my favorite character. It's not like I want to make them unhappy, I want to see their potential when they show their answer in that kind of situation.

I want to give exposition about Lisha, Krulcifer, and the Triad next time.

I also want to talk about this series in general at that time.

And so now it's time for the thank you corner.

To the new illustrator, Murakami Yuichi-sama. Thank you very much for the Triad's illustrations this time that are overflowing with their characteristics!

Well then, I hope we can meet again next time at the last volume.

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A certain day in October 2019 Akatsuki Senri

Credits

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